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Organisational Culture in English Further Education: chimera or
substance.

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degree of
Doctor of Education

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¹ Item 8 – Everyone believes that he or she can have a positive impact

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This study is dedicated to my dad, Nathaniel Templeton Anderson.

Declaration

This work has not been submitted for any other degree, or at any other university and no material contained in this thesis has been offered for publication. I can confirm that all the work is my own.

Abstract

Since the mid-1970s there has been a greater emphasis placed on markets and competition as a means of allocating scarce resources. As a consequence of this the provision of public services has come under close scrutiny. In the English further education sector there has been structural and strategic change. The further education (FE) colleges are positioned to be able to play a key role in the economic and social regeneration of the UK. The development of 'managerialism' has occasioned the use of many practices and procedures more commonly associated with the private sector provision of goods and services. This study examines whether the concept of organizational culture has meaning and validity in a further education context. Research in this area is complex, time consuming and expensive. The concept of organizational culture is examined and evidence is gathered from a case study in Templeton College. The analysis of the evidence employs some of Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of the social world: field habitus and game. The evidence suggests that there is no integrated pattern of shared beliefs or behaviours that can claim to be a distinct entity. External factors are more likely to determine the situated social practices that exist within colleges. The case study approach has limited the external validity of the research and further analysis of colleges is needed to verify the claims in this thesis. The study demonstrates that the migration of private sector management practices and concepts to the public sector is not an unproblematic process. FE would benefit from more extensive practitioner research; the more widely and deeply the colleges understand themselves the better chance for securing lasting improvements. Organizational culture is unlikely to be a significant lever of change in FE and colleges may be better advised to build a teaching and learning ethos.

Key terms: further education, organizational culture; Bourdieu

Abbreviations

BERA	British Educational Research Association
CEI	Centre for Educational and Industry, University of Warwick
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
FE	Further Education
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
LEA	Local Education Authority
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
NPM	New Public Management – managerialism
OCS	Organizational Cultural Survey
TLCFE	Transforming Learning Culture in Further Education research project.

Chapter 1 Introduction and justification for the research

Introduction

This chapter provides some background information and explains the reasons for the study. The section below provides some background information on the ecology of contemporary further education (FE) in England. The issues discussed form recurring themes that have been mediated and reconstructed by the human actors central to the research; the staff of Templeton College.

Background Information

Further education cannot be studied in isolation from the political changes that have impacted upon management, practice and performance within the sector. It is not a new phenomenon to cast education as both problem and panacea to ills of the economy and wider society. The current central government's ambition to develop a highly skilled, knowledge-based, competitive economy, and the reduction of social exclusion and marginalisation places education at the centre of the public policy debate (Thorley, 2004). Schools, colleges and universities are charged with raising standards, widening participation as well as meeting the requirements of parents, employers and the government. Alongside this tough agenda are the demands made of the education services in terms of accountability and audit. The educational policies and values that have emerged from these pressures and expectations form the context of this study. A fuller discussion of these issues is contained in chapter 2.

Justification for the Research

The Conundrum of Culture

‘Operating in a corporate culture is a lot like breathing. You don’t notice you’re breathing you just do it’ (Marks and Mirvis, p.187). This captures the pervasive and elusive concept of organizational culture. It is argued that culture is almost as vital to the organization as breathing is to the human body. But unlike breathing the concept of organizational culture is challenged and contested;

‘Despite much interest in the topic of organizational culture, debate continues over its exact nature’ (Bennett and Durkin, p.200).

Beyond this Silver (2003) doubts whether the concept has any meaning in reference to universities. That debate is central to this study. This vagueness may be acceptable in ordinary conversation but to gain leverage over critical aspects of organizations a much clearer and refined understanding is needed. A better understanding may reveal the effect organizational culture has on English FE.

Culture is one of those words like society and community that implies unitary purpose or integrity not necessarily supported by investigation. Thus it is a convenient term that may conceal more than it illuminates. The view taken in this study is that culture is a dynamic concept that is difficult to define but nevertheless has the potential to impact on organizational actors and outcomes. It seems likely that organizational culture has the same autopoietic nature as national culture (McGuire et al., 2002). The seminal work of Peters and Waterman (1982) asserts that culture exists and its manipulation is an essential element of successful organizations.

In a previous paper in my doctoral studies I examined the factors leading to the merger of two English further education colleges. That study reported the use of the term 'cultural differences'. Since the incorporation of colleges in 1992 merger and reorganizations have become more frequent events (CEI, 2003). In 70.6% of mergers investigated by the CEI cultural clashes were described as 'severe' (CEI, p.14). Prior to the recent merger Woodside College had considered merger with another college in 1996. The potential partners commissioned Coopers and Lybrand to study the feasibility of merger.

Interestingly one of the three major obstacles to merger was cultural difference between the two colleges. Similarly in the recent merger senior managers of the college made fairly frequent reference to this issue but apart from referring to management style the concept had an intriguing opaqueness. Also my reading of the merger literature made reference to the dangers of 'cultural clashes' (Marks and Mirvis, 1998). The accumulated inference is that organizational culture may be a potent factor in the success of colleges. This was amplified by a report, commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), on mergers in the FE sector carried out by the Centre for Education and Industry, at the University of Warwick, that also cited the significance of organizational culture (CEI, 2003). It appears that organizational culture is an important issue but at no stage during the colleges' merger had there been any overt attempt to address the assumed cultural differences. In such a thorough process this was probably not due to neglect or omission but was much more likely to be located in the complexity surrounding the construct of organizational culture (Grant, 2003).

In my second doctoral paper I disaggregated the college along the lines suggested by Peters and Waterman (1982) using the McKinsey 7 'S' framework. The disembodiment of the college was analytically useful but organizations are complex systems. Argyris (1960) asserts, 'The 'respect' for complexity is crucial in the study of the total organization' (p.4). The examination of culture, that for Mintzberg (1995) is part of the essential building blocks of organizations, goes some way to avoid the distortion of the McKinsey Gestalt. The study of the heart, the lungs and the brain is not an effective proxy to understanding the person and similarly the 7 'S' model requires a reconnection of the parts. The 7s investigation was often punctuated with references to culture. In those previous pieces of work my interest in organizational culture was aroused in much the same way as Silver (2003); 'The question of institutions' culture was not the main focus of the research but it emerged as an important but elusive area of analysis' (p. 160). Although my previous writing did not analyse the culture of the college the frequency of appearance of the topic in the organizational literature demands attention. The articles and papers on mergers made frequent reference to cultural 'differences' and as if these were so obvious an explanation or illustration was not proffered. The tale of the emperor's new clothes often came to mind as I struggled to understand the phenomenon of 'organizational culture'.

An important milestone was the work of Peters and Waterman (1982) that linked culture to organizational effectiveness. The Peters and Waterman pot-boiler was based on 62 American companies; 13 European companies originally intended to be studied were omitted. Thus, in common with other authors, the concept of culture is strongly biased

towards private incorporated organizations. In the UK the shift to 'new public management' brought private sector management styles into the public sector and therefore to the education service. The 1992 incorporation of colleges created quasi businesses. The severance of FE from local government created the real prospect of bankruptcy and liquidation for those colleges that fail to 'balance the books'. Colleges are funded by the taxpayer and provide services proscribed by a State QUANGO, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Recruitment, retention and achievement targets must be met to ensure costs are covered, and bearing in mind most colleges spend 65% of income on salaries income shortfall has an inevitable impact on employment. This dissertation not only examines the validity of the construct 'organizational culture' but also has a central purpose to determine whether the import of the concept into FE colleges makes a positive contribution to our understanding of how colleges 'work'.

Although interest in culture dates earlier than the 1980s (Alvesson, 2002) the link to effectiveness was to create a surge of new interest in this elusive topic. The interest in organizational culture is an important step in the evolution of management theory as discussed in chapter 2. A priori evidence exists that culture is a powerful and ubiquitous factor that may impact on the behaviour and actions of employees, Helms and Stern (2001) argue,

'culture is thought to affect the way in which individuals interpret events and how they react to these events, it strongly influences how employees are likely to act as well as how they understand their own and other's actions' (p. 416).

Thus, this hypothesis suggests culture is an important dimension not only of our understanding of organizations but also of their performance. The previous paper in my

doctoral studies did not attempt any analysis of organizational culture. One purpose of the present work is to discover whether that omission represents a significant weakness or a bogus area of inquiry in the context of an English FE college. The comments of DeLobbe et al. (2004) suggest that culture is, indeed, a vital issue;

‘Organizational culture is postulated to be one of the greatest theoretical levers required for understanding organizations’, (p.1).

In Search of Excellence (Peters and Waterman, 1982) claimed that organizational culture was a key component in gaining competitive advantage. The authors raised the notion of ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ cultures. If such a claim is valid the idea could easily be extended to regard organizational culture as an integrated concept, a ‘web of significance’ (Weber, cited by Silver, p. 160) that impacts sufficiently to influence organizational performance. Martins and Terblanche (2003), who specifically investigated the role of culture as a stimulus to creativity and innovation, found culture could have both positive and negatives effects. Culture is elevated therefore to an important variable in organizational performance. The rise of the American corporations and their global migration focussed attention on the replication of domestic success in overseas locations. The work of Hofstede (1980) reflects the desire of business to ‘control’ variables that can influence profit and success; Hofstede researched organizational cultural values in 39 countries. A resurgence of interest in organizational culture and its alleged connection with ‘excellence’, plus other factors identified below, led to the transportation of the construct to the public sector.

This has special resonance in English FE. The landmark speech by James Callaghan to the TUC in 1976 is often cited as the beginning of a seismic shift away from collectivist values to those of the market; as well as establishing a link between educational underachievement and economic underperformance;

‘I am concerned on my travels to find complaints from industry, that new recruits from the schools do not have the basic tools to do the job that is required’ (DES, 1976).

The post-war bubble of economic growth had ended and a period of 30 years where the received wisdom was that the state could manage fluctuations of the economic cycle also imploded. The demise of Keynesian economics heralded a much more general suspicion about the role of public services. Rising unemployment and runaway inflation in the mid 1970s elided into a force that would ultimately tear apart the English Labour Party. The socialist agenda was in disarray and the stalling of the economic engine was held to be unresponsive to the toolkit of public management. Callaghan told his friends in the trade unions ‘we cannot spend our way out of trouble’ (DES, 1976). The Labour government recognised the limitations of public spending as instrument to ‘fine tune’ the economy. The party’s internal reluctance to accept the bluntness of the public spending toolkit was a contributory factor to the election loss in 1979. The consequences of this paradigm shift are still evident today. The introduction of fees in higher education is a further example of the movement towards ‘privatisation’ and therefore an extension of the market. Certainly the Thatcher administration from 1979 began to promote policies that praised the virtues of the market and by default condemned the provision of goods and services by the state. Momentum began to reconstruct the public sector and create what Power (1997) et al. describes as ‘new public management’ (NPM). Perhaps the defeat of

the 1984 miners strike finally buried the collectivist alternative to what had become to be known as ‘Thatcherism’ in the UK and ‘Reaganomics’ in the US.

In 1992 the Further and Higher Education Act gave legislative form to these changes in the FE sector. The act introduced new organizational structures for the colleges that paralleled developments in the school sector where control, and funding, shifted from local government, the LEAs, to school governing bodies. Thus this development is consistent with the deficit view of pre-1980 public sector management and the subsequent reforms. This investigation of organizational culture examines how, or whether, these significant changes have impacted on the values, attitudes and behaviours of the FE actors.

Grant (2003) says that culture ‘has been an important focus of academic management since the early 1980s’ (Grant, p.75). But contra-evidence of the significance of organizational culture in educational settings exists. Silver (2003) is unequivocal, ‘Universities do not now have an organizational culture’ (p.167). Although Deem (2003) does not discuss organizational culture in English universities implicitly her work does challenge Silver’s view, and her findings cite the impact of new managerialism on university organizational culture. Similarly Martin (2002) also casts doubt on the validity of the concept of culture, as an integrated entity in organizations, as well as its specific application in educational organizations. Whether or not an integrated culture exists or not does not denigrate the need for a cultural understanding of organizations (Alvesson, 2002). The fact that no studies of organizational culture exist in English FE is

a major justification for this dissertation. The discovery of its potency or irrelevance will make a contribution to the general understanding of how FE works.

Organizational Culture in Colleges of Further Education - the Challenge for Research

The topic also presents itself as a complex intellectual challenge. Martin (2002) says, 'The 'granddaddy' of dilemmas in this domain: What is culture? What is not culture?' (p.55). McGuire et al. (2002) reinforce the challenge of study in this area by referring to culture as a highly complex and intangible concept. Their work argues the alignment of national and organizational culture has a positive impact on organizational outcomes. Ball (1987) although writing some time ago, confirmed that little study has been undertaken in colleges and that organizational study has not been thoroughly researched in the school sector. He also confirms that organizational study in the private sector filters into the educational domain. A much earlier example of crossover is scientific management, associated with the 'father' of organizational study Frederick Taylor, that Ball (1987) claims was imported into schools between 1911 – 1925 (Ball 1987). One of my tentative hypotheses is that not all imports from the private sector have the same relevance in educational settings. This is largely based on the fact that colleges and businesses, whilst having superficial similarities, have divergent social purposes and different degrees of freedom from State control. Therefore the balance of power between internal and external stakeholders is very different in each sector. The search for improvement in the UK's public services is largely described by mimicry of private sector organizations without any theoretical underpinning. Indeed some private sector

imports may be purely cosmetic changes to create an illusion of performance in the absence of appropriate knowledge and clear understanding of how educational organizations work. It would be unlikely to find that the dramatic changes imposed on colleges and their staffs had not left any mark on attitudes and beliefs. But my hypothesis is that educational workers have not simply melded change into their working 'habitus' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). It is more likely that there are contradictions, tensions and rejections as new 'attitudes' interact with strongly held cultural dispositions. Within colleges the 'force of gravity' is the most notable system of transmission of new competitive values. Senior managers have accepted, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, the new politics of independence and competition. As these values permeate through the layers of the college hierarchy responses have been mixed (Shain and Gleeson, 1999). These responses are partly due to deeply held values and assumptions held by different members of college community. Thus the concept of organizational culture is a topic worthy of erudite and scholarly consideration; to examine the extent that the 'deeply held values and assumptions' are shared by organizational members and therefore deemed to be cultural.

Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education (TLCFE)

My involvement with the Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education (TLCFE) research project has given further stimulus to my interest in the topic of 'culture'. The project challenges the more conventional notions of cognitive and behavioural explanations of learning (Hodkinson and James, 2003). The social constructivist

understanding of learning places greater emphasis on the making of knowledge by learners. Thus learning is not regarded as a simple transmission of knowledge from one person to another but is a more complex phenomenon mediated by the sociocultural dispositions of the agents involved. The project used, *inter alia*, Bourdieusian notions as instruments of analysis and in chapter 5 the impact of these ideas on my own thinking is evident. For example, Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) suggests a unique construction of knowledge contextualised by the dialectic of structure and agency. This study posits the notion that organizations can be classified as 'fields', 'a system of relations that are independent of the population which these relations define' (p.106).

Bourdieu also uses the notion of 'cultural capital' as an attribute that enables or constrains success in formal learning. Proximity to the dominant culture is regarded as a benefit to the acquisition of knowledge that serves to defend status and privilege. A *prima facie* argument can be made, which is explored further in chapter 5, that the same propensity exists within organizations. In the language of Etzioni (1975) proximity to the 'elite', senior managers, is more likely to expose converging values and actions. There is a greater possibility for cultural convergence at the top of the hierarchy. Moving down the hierarchy cultural allegiance is less predictable. It could be argued therefore that an employee's ability to learn the cultural 'rules' of the organization is a requirement for promotion, or at least, a defence against risk. Similarly the TLCFE project drew on the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) that links the processes of enculturation and learning at work. The project has both raised my interest in the notion of culture and also persuaded

me to believe that the success of some employees may be linked to their ability to learn, read and understand cultural signals. The current research seeks to test and examine that belief.

Conclusions

Not least among my reasons for undertaking this study is the commitment to research that can ‘make a difference’. To contribute to a better understanding of college life, through organizational culture, may help interested parties to select the levers that can more precisely lead to institutional improvement. Or alternatively help recognise ‘levers’ that do *not* work. The commitment to research is also founded on my belief that practitioner research is an important variable in the organizational milieu. By undertaking research I am demonstrating my commitment to the ‘learning organization’ (Senge (1996), Fullan (1993), Howard (1993), Drucker (1992), et al.). My strongly held belief is that teacher learning is a fundamental requirement for the promotion and development of sustainable improvements in teaching and learning. Thus ‘walking the talk’ and developing my own understanding of factors that may influence teaching and learning has stimulated my interest in organizational culture. The primary objective of this study is to determine the validity of the concept of organizational culture in FE. This aspiration is closer to ‘scientific’ than ‘practical’ research (Hammersley, 2003) but nevertheless I support Dewey’s assertion that, ‘Example is notoriously more potent than precept’ (Dewey, p.21).

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature related to organizational culture and provides a more detailed review of the contemporary issues facing English FE. From this review various definitions of organizational culture are cited. A composite understanding of organizational culture is offered at the end of the chapter. In this study for ease of reference and readability the word 'culture' is used as a shortened form of organizational culture, reference to wider definitions of culture are clearly indicated in the text. Chapter 3 describes the methodology and methods used in the research and provides an analysis of some of the difficulties encountered as an 'inside' researcher. The analysis of the data follows in chapter 4. This work investigates the findings in comparison to the impact of culture reported in the literature. Finally chapter 5 offers further discussion of the findings, evaluates the validity of the current research and offers suggestions for areas of further investigation.

To summarise, the factors adumbrated above have led me to a tentative hypothesis that is the transmission of macro policy change to impact on micro improvements is more complex and less certain than is generally accepted. This complexity and uncertainty is due in part to the 'intricate web' of values, beliefs and assumptions that are the building blocks of culture. This study attempts to develop an understanding of the nature of culture within an English FE college. My hypothesis is also that without a better understanding of organizational culture improvements will be more difficult to secure and the friction between competing values and assumptions may be to the detriment of a significant group of organizational members – the students.

Finally to close this introduction, I am reminded of the need for rigour by the following,

‘Rarely written in journal articles, it is often said by those who are statistically inclined that organizational culture has become the refuge of the untrained and the incompetent, who will degrade this field if they are not rooted out’ (Ouchi and Wilkins, p. 244).

Although uncertain whether this is a criticism of those inclined to quantitative methods I choose this quote to remind myself of the need for rigour and critical analysis dealing with such a complex and intricate concept as organizational culture.

Chapter 2 The context of the study and a review of the literature

Introduction

There is not a vast literature connecting organizational culture directly with the development of managerialism within the UK public sector. But this chapter identifies a number of reflections and research findings that are pertinent to cultural research in an English college of FE. The chapter charts in more detail the pressures and problems of FE. This analysis leads directly to the specific circumstances of the case study college and the site of this research Templeton College. The first section of the chapter explores the contextual issues of the case study college and reports the turbulence in the further education sector. The chapter also clarifies meanings and definitions of the concepts of organization and organizational culture. The structure of the definitions is generally chronological. The evidence reveals a substantial literature connected to organizational cultural studies within the private sector but relatively few in educational organizations. This chapter also locates Templeton College within the theory and literature on organizational culture. The final section of the chapter distils the evidence into an operational understanding of organizational culture that is used throughout the remainder of this research.

The context of the study – change and challenge in English further education

The development of English further education (FE) has been piecemeal rather than planned. The early history of the colleges, rooted in the Mechanics' Institutes, suffuses vocational educational with a wider social agenda. The moral and educational wellbeing of the 'working classes' has been an ever present, if sometimes, covert function of colleges. The growth of GCSE and GCE Advanced level provision is a reflection of what has sometimes been called the 'second chance' option. The sector's recent history charts the growth of performance targets, 'managerialism' and the consequent pressure on the professional identity of teachers. In part these pressures have resulted in the colleges having one of the worst industrial relation records in the UK (Shain and Gleeson, 1999). College deficits, financial crises and occasionally imprudent management have undermined job security in the 400(c) English colleges. Since the 1980s the colleges have been under pressure to adopt more and more 'business' models of management. This movement culminated in the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 which removed the FE colleges from local authority control and set free-standing, self managing corporations. The structure of the business model was established and this change generated internal realignments. Students emerged as 'customers' or 'clients' and managers were required to meet performance targets. Despite the apparent quasi independence, stringent targets and close financial monitoring allowed the colleges precious little freedom of action. The establishment of independent corporations was matched by a tightening of central control over the colleges. Failure to meet targets

triggered financial penalties and the culture of performance and audit permeated all the layers of the colleges.

At the classroom level curriculum reform signalled an extension of the National Curriculum into the post-16 phase. College funding was dependent on offering 'recognised' qualifications and many leisure and adult education courses disappeared from the colleges. Similarly the inspection of teaching in colleges was passed to OFSTED and raising quality in FE became a major strand of government policy (Gibson, 2002). These changes cannot have failed to impact on teachers, managers, support workers and students in the colleges. This study has emerged to investigate a small area of potential impact – organizational culture.

In the first chapter reference is made to the ecology of the Templeton College within the English further education sector. This sector of English has a recent history that is characterised by change and challenge. James et al. (2007) report from the Transforming Learning Cultures project that,

'...if there is one thing that our research has made visible, it is the extraordinary high pace of change in the Further Education sector' (p.6, James et al.).

The colleges have multiple aims imposed upon them including; expansion of the sector; demands to widen participation; to contribute to the 'lifelong' learning agenda; to meet the needs of employers; to raise standards; and to compete with other providers. This is the background to the importation of private sector managerial techniques that have become known as 'managerialism' (see Brunetto, 2001; Pollit, 1990) or new public

management (Power, 1997). Brunetto (2001) describes managerialism as, ‘the adoption of private sector management tools within public sector organizations’ (p. 466).

New public management (NPM) is the doxa of the economic culture that Foucault describes as ‘governmentality’ (Foucault, 1991). Australia, Canada and New Zealand et al. have also adopted this approach to the provision of public services (Fitzsimmons, 1999). The strong central policy control over FE is the clear driver of change and although shifts in management are a natural concomitant of this there is also a deeper driver of change. A profound shift in economic ideology underpins the recent history of FE.

The emergence of NPM appears to be rooted in the market forces orthodoxy that posits competition as virtuous. The policy changes are both implicitly and explicitly built on a deficit view of the public provision of further education. There is a widely held belief that the management practices of private sector business will help to deliver the stakeholder expectations outlined in chapter 1. The doxa of competition and market forces are the macro versions of the meso changes in management. Paradoxically there is no substantial evidence that competition in education will deliver, or is capable of delivering, a more efficient and effective provision. In fact competition may simply serve to reinforce the status quo where a privileged elite continues to enjoy the major benefits of education system. The market philosophy switches focus much more to output measures than process; a change that has impacted on all sectors of education.

The market also has a propensity towards the production of ‘winners’, and therefore ‘losers’.

The explicit management targets for further education are the trinity of recruitment, retention and achievement. These targets have developed greater importance since the passing the Further and higher Education Act 1992. The removal of colleges of further education from Local Education Authorities by this legislation saw the emergence of both local management and central funding. This uneasy juxtaposition of freedom and control (and tight control exercised through a new funding system) was imposed on an uneven further education landscape. The colleges began the new competitive era from different histories, different locations and with different endowments of physical assets. The colleges also faced a competitive challenge from schools and private providers against a background of demographic change that was reducing the total market. These are likely to be highly pertinent to issues of organizational culture.

The internal workings and values of the colleges are also intimately tied to the external pressures and influences. Income streams are probably the most potent of the external influences in English further education. The funding mechanism of colleges was based on the system used in the former polytechnics. The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) exercised a funding regime that was designed to provide ‘value for money’; specifically more students at lower average cost. An essential difference in the application of this funding mechanism between the former polytechnics and the FE colleges was that the former were experiencing a rapid growth in student numbers. A

concomitant requirement of target setting is audit. Thus colleges face an elaborate set of bureaucratic requirements that need to be completed to obtain central government funding. By 2001 the FEFC was replaced by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) which had a much broader remit, namely the responsibility for all post-16 non-higher education (university) provision. The audit and control function of the LSC was supported by the extension of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) inspection system to FE. Previously the FEFC had carried out its own quality inspections.

Strategic planning units, marketing units and quality control and assurance departments are found in most colleges as more visible signs of the slide towards private sector styles of management and organization. In order to meet the targets set by central government the major thrust of college management has been to exert greater control over those variables deemed to impact on performance outcomes. The creation of a 'quasi-market' and the structural changes that ensued led to the rise of 'managerialism' that signalled a more 'market-driven' attitude to the internal functions of FE colleges.

The human resources and marketing departments etc. that now exist in many colleges can trace their ancestry to these changes. Perhaps the notion of organizational culture is therefore part of the package of private sector imports that are presumed to benefit the organization and operation of UK's post compulsory phase of education. The mantra that everything in the private sector is superior is expressed by Power (1997) as;

'a desire to replace the presumed inefficiency of hierarchical bureaucracy with the presumed efficiency of markets' (p. 43).

The colleges were, and at the time of writing still are, subject to a plethora of new initiatives and policy shifts in terms of both financial provisions and operational objectives. The requirements of central government substantially narrow the scope of local managers who are frequently engaged in a struggle for the survival of the organization. One consequence of the instability in the sector was the development of merger as a strategy to secure the future of some colleges. The creation of Templeton College by merger was a survival strategy for the two partners to the amalgamation.

Templeton College was formed by the merger of Woodside College and Central College. Prior to merger Central College had lurched from crisis to crisis and its long-term viability was far from certain. Although Woodside College enjoyed greater financial security its short-term future required stringent control of costs. This was often translated into job cuts and the consequent dent to staff morale. Woodside College had little prospect of breaking out of the cycle of decline and actively began the search for a partner. The fusion of two colleges seems fertile ground for 'cultural clashes'. Although much of the literature suggests that two organizations may take many years to become a single entity in a real sense (cf. Martin, 2000) there is contra-evidence of this in the case study college.

Despite the fact that cultural differences are recognised problems of merging institutions it was difficult to find evidence of a robust management strategy to ameliorate this problem in Templeton College. The FEFC reported in 2000 that,

‘A number of institutions indicated that addressing ‘cultural differences’ between institutions was one of the most difficult and time-consuming aspects of merger and one with which they were continuing to deal’ (FEFC, p.10).

Similarly the CEI (2003) report asserts that college culture differences, ‘was always underestimated and often ignored in the planning stage’ (CEI, p.25). It is also recognised however, CEI research et al., that merger requirements extract a high management opportunity cost. The challenging aspect of management may also include knowing when returns to time will lead to significant benefits. Attempts to ameliorate the culture differences between two institutions may not be capable of resolution in the short term. However, in Templeton College, there was no evidence of a deliberate decision not to address the problem of cultural differences. Similarly traces of deliberate actions to integrate the two cultures are difficult to detect. The most significant shortcoming in this regard was the absence of clear introduction and induction procedures for staff physically relocated due to merger reorganisation. This fact could reflect the relative lack of knowledge and awareness of the cultural dimension in organizations. This may be exacerbated in the public sector where merger activity is a relative new experience for managers. These issues are given further consideration in chapter 5.

The FE colleges are not unique and many other areas of the public sector face similar pressures. The study locates organizational cultural within a managerialist context, and examines the idea of culture as potential lever of change. The specific impact of the changes outlined above, on the case study college are considered in chapter 4.

Developing an understanding of the term 'organizational culture'

Industrial and commercial organizations are a relatively recent phenomenon growing in significance since the latter stages of the 19th century. Although religious groups and some commercial enterprises can claim a much longer history, it was the economic growth in the early 1900's that led to attention being directed at the entity of the organization per se. The traditional hierarchy grew into a pyramid structure with supervisors and managers assuming responsibility for strictly demarcated areas of work. This structure served the growth of industry well and is still used by some organizations. Etzioni (1975) defines organizations in terms of their structure of compliance. He defines compliance as an integral aspect of organizations the 'equivalent of social order' (p. xxvii) and which exists 'in all social units' (p.3). The traditional pyramid tended towards a 'utilitarian' structure of compliance that perceived human motivation and performance could generally be orchestrated by the use of economic rewards and sanctions. The apex of the pyramid is symbolically, and sometimes actually, the source of authority and power. The top echelons, 'elites' in the language of Etzioni (1975), are more likely to set objectives and thus also more likely to 'own' them. Moving down the hierarchy there may not only be less allegiance to the organizational goals but possible challenge and contestation.

Flatter organizational structures and matrix forms of organization coexist with traditional pyramid forms of internal structure. The matrix system does not carry the same symbolism but may serve to mask authority and hierarchical chains of command. Much

attention has been placed on the internal structure of colleges since incorporation and the shift away from local authorities has led to the movement away from tall structures to flatter hierarchies in many cases. Indeed the principal describes the structure of Templeton College as 'flat' and during the life of this research the internal structure of the college was revised. The structure of the college and its presentation may be symbols of culture and could represent powerful influences on organizational members. It may well be that stratum within the structure places different meanings and interpretations on organizational activities based on their peculiar point of observation.

Defining the term organization

The term organization is a generic term to cover all forms of enterprise. Thus companies, partnerships and sole traders in the private sector; local and national government departments, quangos and other agencies of the state; and providers of goods and services that do not fit in to the previous categories, including religious groups, political parties, charities and other non-profit making bodies may all be regarded as 'organizations'. This definition includes schools and colleges. Daft (1998) offers a formal definition of organizations divided into four elements,

'Organizations are (1) social entities that (2) are goal directed, (3) are designed as deliberately structured and co-ordinated activity systems, and (4) are linked to the external environment' (p. 11).

The external environment is particularly important in the case of Templeton College and other FE organizations. Finance, as well as the college's objectives, is largely determined by external agencies, as discussed in chapter 1. Etzioni (1975) cites Parsons' (1960)

definition of the organization that is similar to Daft's above, that is, social units devoted primarily to attain specific goals. The Daft (1998) definition also recognises the importance of the boundaries of the organization with the external environment. The organization does not exist in a social and cultural vacuum. Indeed it is more likely that the organizational boundaries are fluid and uncertain. Thus as Martin (2002) says,

‘.....strictly speaking we should say “cultures in organizations” and not “organizational culture”’ (p.164).

This seems to capture the plurality of influences that humans bring into their workplaces. It also makes a formidable task to untangle this complex web of influences to define an entity that can legitimately claim to be ‘organizational culture’.

Contu and Willmot (2003) cite Brown and Duguid (1991) who define organizations as ‘collections of communities of practice’ (p.293). This is appealing in the context of Templeton College where departmental boundaries are often related to families of vocations. It seems unlikely that such disparate areas of vocational practice share consistent and converging values and beliefs. Argyris (1960), although keeping a consensus view of objectives says, ‘organizations are intricate human strategies designed to achieve certain objectives.’ (p.11). This is helpful to the extent that it breaks the link between the organization and a physical entity. The word organization does conjure integrity and cohesion, and indeed is suggestive of a physical form, that may owe more to convenient expression than reality.

Organizations are sometimes referred to as ‘open’ or ‘closed’ systems although the latter cannot exist. The term closed systems is however pertinent to organizational theory as

the early literature tended to ignore the impact of the external environment on organizational activity. Colleges of further education may also exhibit a wider degree of openness than other organizations. The central location of Templeton College makes it 'open' to the extent that it is very difficult, without an oppressive security presence, to restrict entry to 'members': students and staff. Although this is not a distinguishing characteristic, shops, hospitals and other organizations reflect similar openness, the college is much more open than many other organizations. Thus openness may have an impact on culture. The diversity of organizational members, the transitory nature of many of the student members, and the problems of restricting entry to non-members may combine to Balkanise cultural understandings. The influence of the external environment also has a much more pertinent influence on the college in terms of operational boundaries. Colleges are restricted by law, the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act prescribes the range of courses that can be offered, and government policy, expressed through funding, is a further attribute of the open/closed duality. These prescripts restrict the scope of internal decision-making and wield specific external influences on the working and nature of the college. Once again it is not easy to find within the corporate sector of the economy organizations that face such powerful external stakeholders. Although private business is limited by legal, moral and cultural constraints these factors touch strategic activities much more lightly than in the public sector. Indeed the scope and scale of college activities is determined in all practical sense by the law and government policy. As discussed in previous work, cf Anderson (2004), the financial levers operated by agencies of central government exert powerful influence over English colleges of further education.

Daft (1998) constructs an illusion with his definition that fails to capture the complexity of educational, and perhaps other, organizations. The college is a social entity with permeable boundaries. The internal structures may symbolise aspects of the distribution power, the classical apex structure for example suggesting ultimate authority resting with one individual; the principal. But the goals of colleges may be the subject of contestation rather than consensus. Thus the college as an organization is amorphous, permeable and dynamic. As Nonaka (1996) says organizations should be seen not as a 'machine but a living organism' (p.19). The concept of the college as organization is therefore not such a neatly framed notion. Although it is convenient to talk in terms of organizations, societies, countries and communities etc as integrated unities the reality is often very different. Policies, mission statements and the like also tend to be reified; losing the essential value laden messages from those in positions of power who talk on behalf these convenient collectivities. Notwithstanding this fact this thesis does not deviate from common practice and, for reasons of convenience, talks of organizations and colleges as if they had separate existence from their members. There is also the issue of the extent of uniqueness of each organization. Different physical locations, different structures and not least different personalities make the transfer of proposition from one organization to another difficult; organizations are complex (Etzioni, 1975).

The Daft (1998) definition therefore captures what appears to be the essential attributes of organizations. Daft (1998) sees organizations as goal directed human activity. Collectivities such as families are thus excluded as they do not have strong focus of the

achievement of definable objectives. But do *FE colleges* have clear objectives? Should they be included in Daft's definition of organizations?

Templeton College as a goal directed organization

A superficial inquiry would almost certainly affirm the inclusion of the college as an organization, as defined by Daft (1998). A closer examination of the *social entity* of the college identifies a number of actors that may or may not be working towards shared goals. Students, teachers, support workers and managers are useful classifications of the social actors within the college. This classification itself is quite arbitrary and it may be prudent to suggest that even within these divisions shared purpose may not exist. For example the goals of teachers may not match the espoused goals of the institution. For funding reasons colleges must maintain and improve levels of achievement, retention and attendance.

Many teachers, motivated by ideological goals, hold the interest of individual students as their paramount purpose. Some would argue, and I would be included, that a 16 year old may not really know what is involved in the study of business for example. After some months of study it is a valid learning outcome for a young person to recognise he/she has chosen a subject that does not match his/her aspiration. To leave the college for employment or to enrol at another college is for many teachers a perfectly legitimate outcome. For the college, however, this is not an 'achievement'. The response from the management of the college would be to ask questions of the recruitment system. This is a

legitimate enquiry given the survival of the college is based on its 'achievement' performance. Again many teachers may argue that a thorough and robust enrolment system is a necessary requirement to prevent drop out but not necessarily sufficient.

The argument here is that goals for educational organizations, and Templeton College as a case in point, may be much more contested than in other organizations. The notion of 'good' education is difficult enough but also there are the complexities surrounding the type of education best suited to specific individuals. This conflict is not purely internal to the organization. It is not a perfect world where academic success is neatly linked to economic success; a 'good' education is not easily connected to vocational destiny. The holy grail of education that seeks to merge individual development and labour market success may be an attempt to 'bottle mist'. To summarise college objectives may be less clearly defined than at first sight. This may not be the case in other organizations, especially those in the private sector of the UK economy.

The development of recognisable objectives, critical to many definitions of organizations, is further challenged by Bell (1988). He constructs schools as 'anarchic organizations' and he offers a more radical challenge to the notion that schools pursue educational goals. He claims that,

'schools face an ambiguity of purpose, the result of which is that the achievement of goals which are educational in any real sense has ceased to become central to the functioning of the school' (p. 9).

Similarly Ball (1987) uses the term 'goal diversity' to challenge 'an assumption of consensus among the organization's members' (p.11).

As mentioned in the previous chapter Templeton College has a diverse provision of courses. Some schools, notably Construction and Passenger Vehicle Engineering, would see their 'customers' as local or national employers and other schools, Media and Business for example, may define their 'customer' as the student. The problem is not to find a set of words that encapsulates this diversity under a coherent set of goals, but it is the more potent melding of behaviours and actions that can clearly be recognised as goal directed. Perhaps the sharpest point of contention in the college may be the divergence around the central notion of learning. The government, through its various agencies, the college, the teachers and indeed the students all have positions and perspectives on the constituents of 'good' learning.

Within the managerialist framework alluded to previously learning is primarily defined as an outcome. The learning targets for Templeton College are defined as 'achievements'. For many teachers the goal orientation is towards process and some teachers would claim achievement is only one measure of learning. To summarise, the nature of Templeton College is that it is likely that goals are more contested and challenged in comparison to private organizations.

The following section reflects my own understanding of organizational culture. Culture is an elusive concept. Parker (2000) cites Raymond Williams (1983:87), 'Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language' (p. 1). Although complicated the use of word culture crops up frequently in discussions of

FE provision. Audit culture, learning culture, entrepreneurial culture, culture change, are examples of fairly common expressions of desired or actual conditions within colleges.

At the heart of the notion of culture are shared understandings, meanings, beliefs, norms, as well as actions and behaviours. Martin (2002) and others have attempted to list cultural attributes and the following examples illustrate the pervasive nature of the concept:

leadership, power, health, formal policies, food, weather, history, myths, stories, rituals, symbols, physical surroundings, dress, décor, and informal policies.

The above gives an indication of the terrain but is not offered as exclusive or exhaustive list of cultural attributes. One purpose of this study is to suggest which attributes may best illustrate or indicate shared understandings in a FE college context. As Martin (2002) states the attributes or components of culture produce, ‘contextually specific modes of understanding’ (p. 223). The following section charts a historical view of culture firstly from a management theory perspective. The earliest theories largely ignored or placed no importance on the notion of culture.

The development of the importance of culture within organizations

The beginning of the twentieth century saw concern to raise production, the ubiquitous driver of change, and led the first management theorists to investigate the phenomenon of the industrial organization. Frederick Taylor and many of his contemporaries Chester Barnard and the Gilbreths, for example, took a mechanistic view of organizations. The concept of the ‘economic man’ that cast workers as adjuncts to machinery was

predominant. Efforts to strain out inefficiency caused by the human condition were a major plank in the developing organizational studies.

For these early management theorists the essential connection with theory was to examine how variables can be exploited to gain greater control over output and therefore competitive advantage. This strategy relied on what Etzioni (1975) described as coercive or economic compliance. The locus of attention was on the performance of workers. It was probably the work of Elton Mayo, in his famous and much discussed experiments at the Hawthorne plant of Western Electric that saw emphasis shifting to different levers within organizations. This movement is reflected in the use of the term 'human resource'. Mayo's work may also be described as 'cultural'. The phenomenon his team observed was about the workers' construction of meaning around consultation and communication. The quality and quantity of communications is a powerful propellant of collective values and beliefs.

The nomenclature 'human resource', is of course quite ambiguous. On the one hand it can be claimed that labour is elevated in esteem, with the concomitant advantages, but alternatively the term can dehumanise workers as a human ingredient in the production process. A notion that will reoccur frequently in this study is the connection between espoused and actual values, behaviours and changes. The oft quoted saying 'our people are our greatest resource' may be part of an elaborate public relations façade rather than a policy that has tangible impacts on employees. But there is wide diversity of practice and many organizations can lay legitimate claim to the enhancement and development of their

human resources. Human resource policies also reflect wider societal changes in values. As an example the introduction of 'paternity leave' by many UK employers is indication of changes in the external environment that penetrate the boundaries of organizations. There is evidence of a trend towards even greater focus on the human potential and most notably this is expressed through the literature and practice emphasising the 'learning organization' (Senge, 1996 and Schein, 1995, et al.).

Cultural studies of organizations have a long history but the 1980s saw a fresh impetus with the publication of *In Search of Excellence* by Peters and Waterman (1982). The text is quoted by many authors who suggest the book rekindled interest in organizational culture. Alvesson (2002) uses the term 'pop-management' to describe the Peters and Waterman pot-boiler. This is a useful term because it captures the nature of the text as clarion call to entrepreneurs, mostly big business, to develop 'strong' cultures to secure competitive advantage. The work does not establish clear causal links between cultural aspects of business and performance. But it certainly has left an impression, even if bogus, by claiming that such a link exists. This type of exposition of culture does lead to 'ownership' of the concept by managers, leading to examples like Swain et al. (2004) who define culture as 'philosophies, priorities etc' (p.287). Clearly Peters and Waterman's work has encouraged some managers to regard culture as a variable to be manipulated in the organization's interest. The establishment of organizational values and the monitoring of employees' observance of these are regarded, by some (cf Swain et al. 2004), as sufficient evidence of cultural cohesion. It is this inference that is particularly pertinent to this study. The development of managerialism can be expected

to lead to greater focus on variables that can deliver expected outcomes. Thus within Templeton College, and other FE colleges, it is likely that attention will be shifted to organizational culture as a potential element of control.

The inclusion of this brief glimpse into the history of management theory is justified by the role of history as an important cultural variable. The invisible acculturation of the present from the past is a powerful shaper of behaviour. The managers and the managed in Templeton College will carry their understandings, prejudices and pre-dispositions that have been shaped by history.

Defining the term organizational culture

There is substantial literature on the subject of organizational culture and the following section gives a flavour of the diversity of viewpoints. A number of researchers (Berrel (2002), McGuire (2002) et al., for example) have reported that national culture is a powerful influence on the organization,

‘However, at a deeper level, axial principles guide action. These principles, by definition, require elaborate rationales because they are timeless truths or basic building blocks of social knowledge’ (Berrell, p.85).

The authors establish the important, if obvious, notion that organizations exist with wider cultural forces. They do go on to state their belief that the external cultural norms exert greater influence than internal systems or cultures. But this is a highly contentious area of research. It requires the examination of motive as well as action and the actors to be able to distinguish between influences that motivate belief or action. As stated earlier my

view of permeable or porous organizational boundaries accepts the influence of wider national traits and characteristics. This view of culture does however expose the transmission of cultural values from generation to generation. The processes of transmission are important. The statement expresses cultural notions as 'knowledge'; that can be acquired, acculturation, or learned, enculturation. The socialisation into organizations, through induction for example, would suggest that enculturation is a deliberate act of managers. But the Berrel et al. (2002) statement also suggests an acquisition of a deeper level of meanings through acculturation. Templeton College operates in an area where there has been significant immigration from western Asia, the Caribbean and latterly Eastern Europe. The term 'multi-cultural' is used to express the influence this influx of people with different traditions, meanings and values has had on local communities. The Saturday night 'curry', for example, may be more a part of English culture than it is of India or Pakistan. But cultural meanings are deeper than behaviours and like the ice-berg metaphor the behavioural phenomenon may or may not reveal the extent of what lies beneath the surface expression of cultural beliefs. In this study national culture remains an important background issue but the central focus of the present writing is to examine meanings, behaviours and values within organizations and within Templeton College specifically. Clearly the 'permeability' of organizational boundaries is demonstrated by 'new public management' (Power, 1997) a fashion that is strongly influenced by the wider 'cultural' shift towards neo-classical economic ideologies.

‘The way we do things around here’ is one of the best known attempts at defining culture; Martins and Terblanche (2003) attribute the origin of this pocket definition of culture to Lundy and Cowling (1966). Like many clichés this type of definition does as much to obscure as it does to enlighten. Martins and Terblanche (2003) offer their own definition as, ‘The deeply seated (often subconscious) values and beliefs shared by personnel in organizations’ (p.65). This definition, similar to that of Thomas et al. (2003) draws specific attention to the complexity of culture for the researcher. To expose to critical gaze the ‘deep seated values’ raises many difficulties not least of which is that the subject themselves may be unaware of their own sub-conscious motivations. Behaviours are open to interpretation and therefore misinterpretation. Holloway and Jefferson (2000) employ the notion of ‘defended subjects’ to explain the way research participants can be captured by dominant discourses. It is unlikely that many research subjects will openly expose values that may be critical or strongly opposed to organizational beliefs. The constitution of Templeton College still contains a clause that defends the freedom of teachers to hold views contrary to received organizational wisdom – the so-called ‘academic freedom’ clause.

‘The Corporation affirms that academic staff have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom relating to academic matters, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions about academic matters without placing themselves in jeopardy or losing the jobs and privileges they have at the Corporation’ (Templeton College, Contract of Employment for Academic Staff, p.5).

But whether this has real currency is unknown. Educational institutions are different from other organizations in this respect and ultimately minority views may claim to be in the *real* interest of students. Interestingly the right to test received wisdom is reserved for academic staff and may owe to cosmetic value than reality. The climate of FE, and

within Templeton College has changed. The college has openly advocated a policy of viewing all employees equally. The personnel manager of the college has stated that he envisages a day when only pay differentiates the different classification of employees and that in all other respects, conditions of service, employees are treated equally (Research Log, April 2002). This again appears to reflect the import of managerialist values that may in part be promoted by the governors of the college. The constitution of Templeton College requires that more than 50% of governors are drawn from the local business community.

A number of metaphors exist to define culture or its purpose. The use of metaphors gives important insights into constructions of meanings. Culture as the 'social glue' holding the organization together is attributed to Martin (2002) by Martins and Terblanche (2003). The metaphor partly explains why managers are tempted to engineer culture to build teams that offer mutual support and thus strong adhesion to task.

Bennett et al. (2002) stress the importance of relationships as an important dimension of culture. The definition of a social group requires that positive relationships exist between members. A collection of individuals in fractious juxtaposition could not operate as collectivity and could not attempt the achievement of common goals. Relationships may be a critical element of culture. The formation of shared meanings must be influenced by the quality of relationships. The archetypal 'us and them', often caricatured by 'management v workers' is a polarisation of individuals that creates difficulties for shared meanings. The UK has experienced significant disruption because of these divergent

relationships and it should be noted that FE colleges had one of the worst industrial records in the UK during the late 1980s and early 1990s (Shain and Gleeson, 1999; Gleeson, 2001). Therefore it may be possible to learn more about how an organization functions and the meanings ascribed to activities by looking at relationships between departments, which Templeton College calls 'schools', relationships between students and teachers, as well as relationships with external stakeholders. Block (2003) has introduced a useful interpretation of relationship, seeing them as patterns or structures that define the ways groups think and behave. Within these patterns is the capacity for individual variation, or agency. This adds a significant extra complexion to research; acknowledging that culture is not a rigid code of human interaction. By force of personality, status, or power, *inter alia*, members may accept deviations from cultural norms.

One relationship that appears in the literature is that between an overarching culture and subcultures. Bijlsma-Franklin (2001) uses this approach,

'To begin with, it is not wise to understand culture as a phenomenon that is homogenous throughout the organization. It is better to speak of cultures, leaving assessment of how widely elements of culture are shared to empirical work' (p. 194).

The same writer offers a definition of culture,

'about the way members make sense of their experiences in the organization, the way they define and interpret situations they are in, in order to be able to act in a meaningful way' (p. 194).

This is a useful definition focussing on sense making as a major element of culture, although perhaps there is not strong enough emphasis on the collective nature of this activity. The multiple cultures, or sub-cultures approach does contrast with those writers

who tend to see culture as an integrated organizational construct. There is certainly a prima facie validity to this idea. In a college with different vocational groupings it would be easy to see each as following the workplace values and norms, even if in an adulterated vicarious form. But this form of evidence really needs to be backed up with empirical research. In such a complex area arriving at common sense conclusions is an appealing but not necessarily valid approach. Bryman (1989) does dampen the enthusiasm for empirical enquiry as he claims;

‘many organizations are resistant to being studied, possibly because they are suspicious about the aims of the researcher’ (p2).

The reality of organizational life, in many cases, is that critical comment and criticism are not easily distinguished by those in power. In the same way that the ‘voice’ of the organization is a reflection of those in power, criticism can be seen as an attack on authority. However it must be emphasised that in the case of Templeton College the senior managers and the principal have offered considerable support and encouragement for the present research. There has been no sense of restriction or secrecy regarding access to information, for example.

Martin (2002) suggests that an eclectic approach to organizational theory is best. Her work classifies the theory of organization culture into three distinct groups. These are integrationist, differentiated and fragmented; Sackmann (1997) adopts a similar approach. The integrationist approach is very common and suggests identifiable patterns of actions, values and stories that unite the members of an organization. The interpretations of Peters and Waterman (1982) and Mintzberg (1995), for example, take an integrationist approach that leads to theories of ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ cultures that can

influence organizational success. Firms in competitive industries find this notion attractive as it seems to offer an opportunity to ‘control’ yet another variable that can lever competitive advantage. Possibly in organizations with unambiguous and tangible objectives, or in small new companies where the founders influence is still potent, there is a greater propensity for an integrated culture (Schein,1992). Workers at Jaguar Cars, or at Rolls Royce, for example may well have unity of purpose; the production of a quality vehicle. In these cases all actions and behaviours can be ‘tested’ against the measure of quality or defect free production. In schools, colleges and hospitals the objectives appear relatively simple but are in fact complex and, to a great extent difficult to measure; as has been discussed earlier. This has not stopped measures being employed but these may run counter to the mobilisation of staff around a core purpose. The reduction of waiting lists in hospitals may be achieved by switching nursing care from the organization to the family. Such a strategy may alienate rather than motivate staff. Similarly in schools examination results may be improved with the opportunity costs of less emphasis on the moral or spiritual values that many teachers regard as important. There cannot be doubt however that objectives have the potential to influence culture. The espoused objectives of organizations may be supported or undermined by concealed objectives that are widely held by groups of workers.

The differentiated approach is also reported by (Brunetto, 2001).

‘Within an organization there is probably one core set of beliefs, attitudes and assumptions, as well as number of sub-cultures that exist as long as they do not challenge the core culture’(p. 467).

The suggestion here is not of a uniform converging culture but of sub-cultures that both converge and diverge within different sections of the organization. As mentioned previously this is appealing in an FE setting where clearly different departments have different patterns of membership and contrasting work experiences. For example the dominantly female population of the caring departments within Templeton College contrast with the male dominated areas such as engineering or construction. The differentiated model does suggest that some common strands could link the satellite cultures in an identifiable way. Brunetto (2001) does however claim that divergence is constrained by the 'core culture'. Her evidence of core culture is contained in mission statements and statements from senior managers. The importance of these messages is accepted but they do not themselves necessarily indicate 'core culture'. Leaders and others may be tempted to espouse values and behaviours that they believe to be in the interests of the organization. Even where the leadership behaviour and actions conform to the value statements there is no automatic link to the minds and perceptions of other employees. In a world of complex semiotics and marketing messages some people have become suspicious of the power to manipulate their minds.

Mintzberg (1995) employs the idea of 'ideology', which he regards as one of the essential building blocks of organizations, to explain the impact of culture on organization that creates something 'intangible yet very real, over and above the concrete components of organizations' (p.374). This Gestalt model of organizations reinforces the potential importance of the concept that is shown by Mintzberg (1995) as 'a kind of halo that surrounds the entire system' (p.351). But like Schein (1993) Mintzberg (1995) links

culture to the founders of the organization; an unhelpful link in the analysis of a mature public sector organization such as Templeton College. However the idea of charismatic individuals around who ‘influencers coalesce’ may exist in mature organizations.

Culture and leadership

The literature, although not extensive, does suggest a link between culture and leadership (Block, 2003). Lam (2002) expresses this as the, ‘intricate relationship that exist among leadership, structure and culture’ (p. 439). As described above organizational policies are ultimately expressions of those in power and that generally means the formal leaders within organizations. Informal leadership is also likely to influence shared meanings and values in many organizations. One interesting aspect of the present study will be to discover whether strongly held values by teachers, relating to the moral purpose of education, permeate the views of non-teaching staff and the students. This assumes that teachers in Templeton College hold ‘strongly held values’ about the wider impact of education on the lives of their students.

Schein (1992) regards culture and leadership ‘as two sides of the same coin’ (p.1) and as mentioned above organizational policies are often the tangible expression of normative judgements of leaders. The leaders’ values are likely to be refracted and reworked as they are transmitted and interpreted by different groups within the organization.

Organizational members are not passive recipients or neutral observers of messages and actions. Schein’s work places emphasis on enculturation and therefore creates space for

his conclusions regarding the importance of leaders, who presumably have the capacity to influence what is 'learned'. The development of patterns and traditions in the workplace requires leaders to understand cultural attributes or they risk going against the grain of shared values (Schein, 1992). This is a critical concept in the present study as the hypothesis is that some recent innovations in FE, for example managerialism, are antithetical to the patterns and traditions of educational organizations. One specific example is the tendency to over-manage when attempting to reach short-term objectives. The annual cycle of college targets frames goals for managers that may sit awkwardly alongside the slower adaptive processes that are implied by learning. For example prior to the OFSTED inspection at Templeton College the college ordained that a uniform lesson planning document should be used. The managers were attempting to forestall lesson planning criticism. The 'one size fits all' approach however was not welcomed by a number of teachers, many of whom had developed their own effective lesson planning documentation.

Etzioni's work (Etzioni, 1975) has an influence on this cultural study as compliance is recognised as a potential impact on culture. Compliance is expression of power and therefore perceptions of subordinates and superiors is an important dimension of culture. Etzioni also employs other useful organizational characteristics that are used as attributes to lever a better understanding of complex organizations. Thus his concept of 'participation', for example, allows consideration of how position in the organizational hierarchy may be an influence on actions and beliefs. In contrast to management theorists clearly Etzioni (1975) writes from a sociologist's perspective. In a cultural

context the involvement of an organization's members, ranging from commitment (positive) to alienation (negative), is a useful spectrum along which to position members. Tested against some organizational value, for example its mission, the involvement of employees can be used as evidence of the extent of integration or fragmentation of cultural identity. The empirical work recorded in chapter 4 seeks to report on the methods and findings of such an approach.

In their study of transformational leadership Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) claim that leadership can exert influence on four school conditions; 'These conditions include purposes and goals, school structure and social networks, people, and *organizational culture*' (p. 115; italics added). They employ a version of the widely used definition of culture, 'as the norms, values, beliefs and assumptions that shape members' decisions and practices' (ibid. p. 115). Interestingly Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) locate 'school ethos' in structure and organization. This draws a distinction between culture, that may be difficult to cultivate and control, and ethos. The latter, in so far as it impacts on the learning environment, can be deliberately constructed. The transmission of values and beliefs to students need not necessarily reflect the deeply held values of teacher. Thus ethos can be a matter of policy and practice rather than reflection of collective values. The authors also cite Bosker et al., (1990) who claim that classroom conditions make a greater impact on student achievement than school conditions. Here is evidence that even if culture is a mediating condition in schools and colleges its impact is weaker than classroom variables. However this study is keenly focussed on the evidence for the *existence* of culture; further study is needed to determine whether the existence of

‘norms, values, beliefs and assumptions’ make a positive or negative impact on student outcomes.

Organizational culture in schools and other public sector organizations

As mentioned above there is a wider drift in UK society towards notions of competition and the agency of individuals in the operation of markets. In education there has been the transmogrification of the *student* into the *consumer*. Language is an important medium of cultural expression and the significance of this switch may be much more important than many suspect. It has already been noted that national culture is a powerful shaper of organizational values (Berrell et al., 2002) and the influence of market economic ideologies has been a potent force in the UK since the 1980s. This change of emphasis finds expression in the introduction of financial incentives, for example, in the form of Educational Maintenance Allowances (EMAs). EMA is a means tested benefit that pays up to £30 per week for college attendance to 16 - 19 year old and is a switch from moral imperative to remunerative. Choice, a powerful symbol of market economics, to attend college is distorted by a financial incentive to tempt the erstwhile conscripts from the school. The distortion could be a positive one, allowing a student to study rather work. But the change has significant cultural implications, not only to colleges but to wider society. Not least the change is a symbolic reinforcement of the potency of economics as a determinant of choice. My particular interest is in the way that college actors respond by action and thought to this change. Will the de facto payment of *wages* to students bring new methods of discipline and control? How does the financial incentive relate to

the concept of student as customer? How will payment impact on student involvement, participation and commitment? In short how will such innovation impact on college culture?

In a cultural study the inclusion of 'clients, customers, and inmates' has *prima facie* significance. The dispositions of these groups especially clients and customers appears likely to impact on attitudes and values of the employees. Disastrously the owner of a High Street jewellery chain, Gerald Ratner, described his products as 'crap'. This unfortunate remark had the inevitable consequences, and led to the sale of the business to a competitor; not least because the owner was disparaging his own customers. What I am suggesting is that entry and socialisation into an organization will have to pay some regard to the dispositions of its 'customers'. Customers can exert powerful influence over organizations; the staff of shops catering to more middle class customers tend to differ from those focussing on less affluent clients. The customers can define aspects of organization. Also organizations are likely to build constructs around their perceptions of 'customer' expectations. It is suggested that universities are staffed by middle class teachers teaching the middle classes and colleges of FE have working class staff teaching the working classes. Whether this broad generalisation is true is perhaps less important than the perceptions of customers and employees. Whilst perception is not reality, for many it is a good enough proxy.

These questions reinforce the premise of my argument that college culture cannot be assessed without recognition of the student influence. This judgement is potentially a

significant impediment to the free flow of private sector concepts, such as organizational culture, into the provision of public services. Using Etzioni's classification (Etzioni, 1975) colleges are normative organizations. They, unlike schools that often employ coercive measures, rely to a significant extent on the moral commitment of students and staff. This is similar to universities where one would expect the moral commitment to be greater. Students do volunteer to join the college. It would be irresponsible, in an FE context, not to recognise that many students face pressure from parents and possibly have few alternatives, factors that temper the 'voluntary' nature of the choice. Without beginning a debate about free will and determinism it is important perhaps to say that few decisions are made, however, without pressure. Every decision should be balanced against its consequences although few of us could claim such a rational approach to life's choices. The introduction of EMAs can be regarded, however, as move to become, like many other organizations, more 'remunerative'. It is perhaps a future area of research to investigate the impact EMAs have on student participation and involvement, and the effects of control and discipline. In this cultural study my proposition is that student membership of the organization now resembles that of other members, employees. Within both groups there are normative and remunerative controls operating with the switch to the latter signalling more extrinsic than intrinsic motivation to participate. To put this another way students in receipt of EMAs have become quasi-employees of the college. This new student status may replace commitment (to learn) with expediency (survive to collect the money). The impact of this may be considerable cultural ambiguity. However it must be emphasised the students, especially in FE, are not a homogenous group. In fact there is great diversity and whilst some students are paid by

their employers to attend courses many FE students are still unpaid ‘volunteers’. These issues are discussed in chapter 4 in the light of analysis of the data collected from Templeton College.

As stated earlier, organizational values are determined by those groups with most power. In colleges this is the senior management group. In the past colleges had a more democratic structure where academic boards may have influenced college mission and objectives. In line with more ‘business-like, managerialist, organizational models policies are now much more firmly in the domain of managers. This shift of authority from elected to appointed roles is embraced by the term ‘managerialism’ – often defined, and widely used in this study, as the employment of private sector management styles (Power, 1997). Commitment to organizational values is likely to be stronger at the top the organizational hierarchy (Etzioni, 1975). Moving down the hierarchy commitment, to the organization and its values, will be reduced (Helms et al., 2001). This is a logical assumption based on the evidence that organizational values are formed by a group who have developed a particular set of propositions. The exposure to the formulation of values falls in a managerial hierarchy. This poses the interesting question of how strongly correlated shared values are with the level of democratic decision making in organization.

The linkage between different parts of the organization is broken in fragmented theories. The suggestion here is that departments of the organization operate in cultures that are

not shared with other parts of the organization. Whilst disagreement exists over definitions of culture there are not many claims in the literature that it does not exist, although an exception to this can be found in Silver (2003).

Bell (1988) described schools as 'anarchic organizations' mainly due to their goal diversity and range of participants. This does not appear to be a helpful description. Some order and structure, even if contested, does exist in schools and colleges and few would argue that that is an undesirable circumstance. Weick (1988) adopts the appealing notion of seeing educational organizations as loosely coupled systems. This is helpful in breaking the powerful paradigm that sees organisations as integrative, purposive and framed entities. Loosely coupled systems may not demonstrate the same level of consensus and co-ordination as the dominant discourses suggest. As Weick (1988) says, 'the coupling imagery gives researchers access to one of the more powerful ways of talking about complexity' (p59). Weick (1988) however does employ the cultural 'glue' metaphor. This may be an unhelpful connection as presumably the 'glue' holds and locks together the formerly floating elements of organizational entities

Miller (1996) in his study of pupil behaviour devotes significant attention to the organizational culture of schools. His general argument describes teachers as isolated professionals deriving most reward from pupil/student interaction. But,

'Despite these barriers to a shared professional culture, teachers need reference groups from which to derive norms and values for their practice' (p. 96).

The same researcher does identify that teachers have, 'certain affiliative and affective needs in respect of colleagues' (p. 97). Miller's evidence suggests a bonding need for teachers that is not necessarily based on shared beliefs and assumptions. Indeed the

overall impression of this research, conducted in 24 schools, is that to a great extent the classroom still remains a secret world where the teacher's 'theory in action' is demonstrated. Espoused theory may not reflect underlying beliefs and values. The evidence from my research log concurs with Miller's findings where a great deal of teacher talk surrounds problem students and/or problem classes. The main thrust of teachers' conversations is directed at fishing for sympathetic agreement, 'that class is the same for me' (Research log, April 2005). Teaching does appear peculiar, from an organizational viewpoint. Teaching staff operate in two distinct arenas; the classroom and wider community of the school/college. The values, indeed aspects of college culture, of the wider college need not necessarily be reflected in the classroom. This dichotomy is underpinned by the divergent processes of learning and organizational control. The former is personal and relational where the latter, by necessity in large organizations, has a propensity to be impersonal and bureaucratic. Should this argument be valid it is likely that different value systems operate; this is a form of political correctness where awareness of college/school policies promotes espoused theory that may or may not converge with theory-in-use.

A number of studies have taken place in the National Health Service (NHS) in the UK and the following sections report contrasting research results. Mackenzie (1995) surveyed culture in a NHS trust and her only discussion is on methodology. The work is thus rather superficial as the emphasis is on data collection and the range of methods used is not backed up by a thorough analysis of findings. The data are presented unproblematically where in fact there must be issues of internal and external reliability.

Although her data contain contradictory findings she does not attempt to develop a position on the possible existence of sub-cultures and her work appears to assume an integrated stance on culture. Despite a definition of culture that emphasized approaches to problem solving and decision making, analysis of the data was silent on these issues. This was a disappointing summary although a number of innovative methods of data collection were used.

Given the comments above the findings of Mackenzie (1995) have to be regarded with caution. She found that,

‘staff did not feel valued by the organizationstaff felt trusted by their managers and also believed their managers were trustworthystaff believed their workloads were heavystaff showed loyalty to the organization and to their clients’ (p.75).

The data, therefore, did reveal some aspects of values and beliefs. The loyalty finding was perhaps a little surprising as it was reported that changes were taking place to build the ‘director’s image’ (p.75). The concern for image is often contrasted with concern for substance but this study found convergence between these goals. Staff were loyal whilst,

‘not clear about the organization’s mission and were not clear about the future direction of the organization’ (p.75).

The observations and findings really needed to specify whether these views were held at all levels within the organization, or, if differences between functional roles were identified, and whether any gender or age differences were found.

Another NHS study by Preston and Loan-Clarke (1997) reflected upon an attempt to create an 'information-led culture' (p.120) in a community health care trust. This research made reference to the 'audit culture' of the NHS (a notion that has strong resonance with English FE). The organizational objectives were subjugated by the, 'governmental requirements to produce detailed statistics and information for the purposes of calculating the amount of money allocated to it [the Trust]' (p.120). A staff 'hammered by change' (p.121) and a significant divergence in objectives creates a very different view of the NHS than that alluded to by Mackenzie (1995). Basically the focus of research was around the introduction of a new information system which a manager claimed would make sure, 'decisions are made on information and knowledge, not just intuition' (p. 120). Despite this the writers report, 'A third (30 per cent) [sic] of staff felt that 'intuition not information, works best' in their jobs' (p.121).

The attempt to introduce change does appear to have identified that a significant minority of nurses did hold shared beliefs; although the report does not make clear whether the remaining 70% held the same view as the manager. But this is perhaps unlikely given that the report goes on to say, 'Only 16 per cent of staff in the Trust felt that senior managers understood the difficulties faced by them in their jobs' (p. 121).

In contrast to the Mackenzie (1995) research, cited above, Preston and Loan-Clarke (1997) found, 'a tension between commitment to the organization and a commitment to the nursing profession' (p. 121). The identity of professional workers and the construction of meaning around their status and power are important issues in cultural studies. There does appear evidence of a classic conflict between managers and

professional workers in the Preston and Loan-Clarke (1997) research. Divergent objectives appear to be at the root of these differences. Professional training, and to some extent the post-war tradition of public service, place the patient, or the student, at the centre of professional concern. A newer ideology of budget, audit and non-client centred targets are likely to create cultural misunderstandings. This culminated in the claim by some staff that their professional allegiance was the source of exploitation, 'They [the 'management'] know that we are committed to our communities so they abuse it' (ibid. p.121). These issues did not appear in the Mackenzie (1995) study. Preston and Loan-Clarke do seem to reduce this cultural conflict to an issue of communication. They assume rational positivism by claiming that improvements in communication may remedy the problem. Given the nature of culture discussed in this study improvement in communications may do nothing to alter deeply held beliefs and values. Once again the authors appear to assume there is an integrated culture and the tensions they report can be papered over by newsletters and other communicative interventions. Perhaps as a first step the NHS managers need to develop a good understanding of the cultural forces at work. In this way they may at least understand the problem before embarking on a solution.

The FE setting however may posit a much more dialectic struggle. The reforms of teachers' contract and the consequent perturbations in industrial relations may have been a calculated strategy, cf. Gleeson (2001), Grant (2003), Shain and Gleeson (1999). The shift of position required by the employers may have been impossible to reach by negotiation therefore a campaign of attrition was the deliberate choice to force

‘modernisation’ on the ‘lethargy of the public sector as it creaks its way into the twentieth [sic] century’ (Preston and Loan-Clarke, p.120). These sentiments are the hidden agenda of public sector change. Indeed there is an unspoken, to some extent, view of public sector workers locked in a *culture* of bureaucracy and control. The core values, the critics hold, are supported by unionisation and the consequent resistance to change. In the following research this premise appears to be the motive for reform.

In another public sector project Farrell and Ho (1996) assume organizational culture is a malleable variable as they suggest that the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering, business planning and improvements in quality can ‘develop the organizational culture’ (p. 39); evidencing that there is deficit view of the pre-existing culture.

Furthermore the proposed changes are strongly rooted in the market discourse. It is not suggested here that ‘quality’ has not been a public sector goal. The traditional argument, whether valid or not, is that the prime objective of the public services was student, patient, or client quality. The secession of the control of culture to management, in the same way that quality management can be ‘developed’ is probably unrealistic. Change and cultural dispositions are critical organizational issues but the perspective of these authors is that of management. The implementation of change, such as a greater emphasis on customer needs to inform service provision, is an initiative that should be taken in the light of a cultural understanding of the organization. Initiatives may change cultural perceptions but it appears equally likely that *they will be changed by* these same perceptions and refracted through the cultural lens of different groups of workers. Farrell and Ho (1996) seem to assume attitudinal and behavioural change equates to cultural

change and they do not acknowledge that employee compliance may be creating the illusion of change. Compliance by organizational members may in reality mask an ossification of cultural values. The work of Farrell and Ho, therefore, reflects a change in management practices as a taken for granted variable that can be used to re-engineer organizational culture. Little reference is made in the research of external influences that may impact on internally held beliefs. For example the changes in the UK labour market, and the perception of these changes, are likely to be reflected in employee attitudes and beliefs. The general shift in accepted wisdom that emphasises a reduced role for the government and increasing emphasis on self-reliance is in some measure likely to distort employee perceptions.

The authors also reinforce the idea that organizations *should* be non-conflictual. There seems no *prima facie* reason for this. Conflict and contestation can be healthy and it may be more viable to seek systems of resolution and ventilation rather than convergence and integration. Once again the authors of this study treat organizational culture as an unproblematic variable susceptible to management reengineering.

Returning to FE's nearest organizational neighbour, schools, Walker and Ryan (1999) using Handy's (1995) caricatures of culture describe schools as adopting a predominant 'role culture'. Charles Handy developed four cultural classifications [that appear to rely heavily on early work by Harrison (1972)] which he called, 'role, club, task and person.' Role culture is where status and formality are dominant cultural traits. Schools and colleges reflecting this cultural model are likely to have detailed written policies and

people tend to be managed rather than led. Roles are reinforced by rituals and routines. Interesting in Templeton college there is emphasis on team work and collaboration but the principal nearly always conducts his general staff meetings alone. Standing out in front, the holder of information, he clearly fills the pinnacle role in the organisation. This represents the symbolic action that may carry the hidden meanings and underlying values of organizations. Club culture is characterised by a spider's web with a central authority figure. Influence recedes as staff occupy less central positions and typically this organizational model selects people who fit in with the dominant ideology of management. Task culture is the metaphor of knowledge and capability. Increasing the functional areas of quality and finance are seen as the hub of decision making. Finally Handy erects a notion of person culture where autonomous professionals operate in high trust environments.

Handy's work like Peters and Waterman (1982) belongs to that genre of pop-management where these experienced and persuasive writers offer nuggets of wisdom to organizational leaders. Classifications are sometimes helpful but often their alluring neatness seeks to blind rather than illuminate. These authors do not claim erudite and cautious systems of research therefore the limitations of their judgements must be recognised. Most organizations, and certainly the college, have aspects of all classifications. The dissection of the whole to fit the classification involves assigning influence and importance to particular parts. This tends to undermine the relational significance between the parts: functions, personalities, roles and policies. This approach also under-emphasises the collective nature of culture and makes it transparent that the

classification has been imposed on the organization by an outsider; a lens that may not reflect the organizational actors' understandings and beliefs.

Lee and Yu (2004) did find that there was some evidence of correlation between culture and performance in their study of 10 organizations in Singapore. The evidence for the hospitals within their research, however, was that no significant correlations existed.

The fact that hospitals are in the service sector did not appear, per se, to be significant as the sample organizations included other service providers; insurance companies. It is my contention that hospitals like schools are less likely to exhibit converging or uncontested goals. It is important to note that three of the four hospitals in the study had recently been privatised but the researchers did not report any variations due to this change of status. It could be argued that privatization drew the hospitals away from public service values. The temporal proximity to this change of status was recognised by the writers as a potential source of distortion in their findings.

The physical environment may also be an influence on organizational members although in a school setting the design of the buildings was found to be less important than use and maintenance (Mortimore, 1998). This researcher reports that leadership is a key issue in effective schools by most studies (Mortimore, 1998). Mortimore (1998) links school effectiveness with positive cultures although she found effectiveness could vary more between school departments than between schools. This points to the role of 'middle managers', heads of school in Templeton College, as being important conduits of the leadership style. In schools and colleges however the nature of the department creates

genuine reason for a contextual interpretation of leadership messages or school policy.

Would tighter control be more efficient and effective? This poses the issue of loose and tight control, a key issue for managers (Weick, 1988). Schools should fight against over-control on the one hand and chaos on the other (Fullan, 1993).

The dynamics of classroom is not a stable or predictable factor. Schein (1992) uses an educational example to underpin the powerful significance of culture when he says as teachers,

‘we encounter the sometimes mysterious phenomena that different classes behave completely differently from each other even though our material and teaching style remain the same’ (p.4).

An initial view of the organizational culture of Templeton College

This section distils my own understanding of organizational culture that can be applied to Templeton College. The above is a persuasive account of the complexity of organizational culture. In schools, colleges and universities the influence of structures and human agency suggests an even greater depth of complexity than exists in many profit making organizations. One further element of that complexity is size. Templeton College has grown by merger, operates on three main sites and has nearly 1000 staff.

Using Handy’s (1995) analogy of the spider’s web with the leader in the centre, he sees influence diminishing as the organization spreads out from the centre, ‘.. the lines of power and influence, losing importance as they go farther from the center [sic]’ (Handy p.14). It is reasonable to assume that the larger the ‘web’ the greater scope for remoteness from the leader’s influence. This distance may strain the formal systems of

communication and generate scope for informal messages to circulate. The informal system can be a powerful tool of opinion and value formation.

My construct of culture sees it as a force that can attract and repel. Thus some organizational events, the announcement of a financial deficit, for example, evidence tightly coupled allegiances within the organization. In similar fashion the solutions to the financial difficulties, often not subject to democratic control, do not seem to enjoy the same sense of unity. Culture does have constraining properties, indeed the logical conclusion to a highly integrated set of shared values, beliefs and assumptions would be group think; a rather Wyndhamesque scenario.

As described in chapter 4 Templeton College has a range of policies directed at controlling and co-ordinating the behaviour of staff. These range from health and safety to student discipline. Miller's (1996) research was focussed on pupil behaviour and he investigated the impact of discipline policy. He reported,

‘Even in a number of the schools with explicit policies, teachers were still able to identify prevailing attitudes and assumptions of the staff – the staff culture – as being incompatible with the formally expressed policy’ (p.101).

One of the difficulties of cultural enquiries is to probe beneath surface behaviour, alluded to earlier as compliance, to expose underlying values and beliefs. Miller's evidence is that ‘attitudes and assumptions’ are robust enough to remain resistant to behavioural policies.

The proliferation of college policies does have symbolic culture impact. However there does appear to be a general tendency in the market oriented society to use the law as remedy for dissatisfaction. The audit culture of the college is encouraged therefore by the external pressures. For example many companies regard redundancy policies and equality opportunity policies etc as shields against litigation rather than shapers of behaviours and action. In Templeton College it is difficult to establish the balance between policies as a shield and the role of formal agreements as proactive management.

The situation of Templeton College does differ from schools, not least because of a large cohort of non-teaching employees. To a large extent the requirement for data by the funding agencies is responsible for the growth of non-academic staff. Templeton College is required, as are all other FE colleges, to produce detailed performance and outcome results. Inevitably this has led to a greater burden on staffing. The college would also claim that the costs of these staff is not fully funded and poses another example of external influence on college actions. Not least is the curtailment of other activities where staff could have been deployed.

Also schools do appear to have more clearly defined boundaries than colleges. For example the access to school premises, in most cases, is more restricted than many colleges; especially colleges like Templeton College that are close to town centres. But boundaries are also metaphysical. School is much more strongly associated with children, despite the fact that modern school 6th Forms house adults studying a broad curriculum. Society has different expectations of schools, for example, the transmission

of social, 'cultural' and moral values. These expectations and activities produce tangible difference between schools and colleges.

Notwithstanding the difference between schools and colleges the external environment of these organizations has been subject to similar pressures. It appears unlikely that external factors do not permeate organizational boundaries. Further evidence can be seen in Gleeson and Husbands (2001) who develop the concept of the 'emerging performance "culture" in secondary education' (p.3) reflecting the pressure on schools to deliver year on year improvements in qualifications. This strategic goal mirrors the demand for private business to achieve year on year improvement in profit. Colleges are equally affected by such demands. In Templeton College its latest OFSTED inspection (November, 2003) determined that a three year trend of better results was evidence of 'improvement'. Gleeson and Husbands (2001) describe the context of schools and colleges as 'bounded by a real and seismic shift in educational policy and the way schools are run' (op.cit. p. 3). There is little doubt that the external changes have impacted on the internal organization of schools and college and that there has been a corresponding impact on staff relationships and beliefs. The assumed lack of good 'quality' management and leadership for example has created an environment where one can see evidence of a schism within educational organization. For example; 'we can do this as long as *the management* don't know' (Research log extract – quote from teacher at Templeton College).

The colleges and the public sector in general are highly unionised and teacher talk of this kind reflects a shift in perceptions. The extent of unionisation also means that some innovations are contested and challenged; the introduction of the 'new' contract for lecturers is testimony to this. In April 2005 not all staff at Templeton College were employed on the same contract and efforts to standardise teacher contracts was still a controversial and heated debate. It is another area of study to consider how far teachers regard themselves as 'workers'. On the one hand the highly unionised workforces and forms of industrial action prosecuted to achieve collective aims suggests a traditional 'worker stance'. But also most teachers claim professional status. In this discourse teachers would claim the right for technical autonomy in the discharge of their responsibilities. The dichotomous stance of the teacher profession is further complicated in the college where many teaching staff still prefer the term 'lecturer' to describe their role. This appears to be a claim to status and an attempt to distinguish teaching in college from that in schools. Templeton College teachers, generally, report a preference for teaching students as 'adults' and therefore adopt more liberal practices than used in school. This has not been uncontroversial. In the engineering departments the head of school reported resistance from staff to allow students to use informal form of address. Many older staff preferred the courtesy of 'Mr. X' rather than the informality of first names.

The first major conclusion gained from the evidence above is that organizational culture is dynamic. There seems little evidence for stasis in most aspects of Templeton College's

recent history. Similar conclusions were reached in the Transforming Learning Cultures in Further Education (TLCFE) findings, cf. Hodgkinson, P. and James, D. et al. (2003).

Templeton College is also unlikely to exhibit features of an integrated culture. Too much diversity exists and too little emphasis is given in the college to promotion of core values.

An appealing description of culture is as a system of collective sense making; a process of framing and understanding talk, actions and behaviours. But the essential characteristic of a construct that can lay claim to being cultural appears to be the sense of 'shared' perceptions.

Conclusions

The above is an important aspect of this research. A flavour of the complexity and depth of previous research is reflected in the broad areas of study. The absence of a clear definition of culture presents a further research challenge. That task is accepted in the remaining chapters of this study where the specific cultural identity of Templeton College is investigated. Therefore there should emerge an operationalised definition of organizational culture.

The literature and evidence from previous research has led me to a view of organizational culture as a constellation of variables that enjoy shared meanings. Organizational members need not have identical interpretations of values but there will be recognisable characteristics that inform and define behaviour. The constellation is dynamic and relationships within it are not constant. The constituents of culture, identified and

explored in the following chapters, are subject to the forces of attraction and repulsion. There are incidents of convergence but also episodes of divergence as the constellation interacts with internal and external perturbations. In many cases, as far as Templeton College is concerned, many of the perturbations are rooted in external changes. The mediation and reaction to these changes by the members of the organization shape, refine and redefine what can be described as the organizational culture of the college.

The central concepts of the research are connected to the development of interest in organizational theory. This is particularly relevant in that the 'science' of organizational study is largely driven by the search for greater efficiency. Efficiency is often a private sector euphemism for cost reductions. There is a very strong connection between notions of organizational culture and managerialism within Templeton College and FE colleges in general. The search for levers of influence and control is a core aspect of management. But this chapter has shown that the reality of organizational culture is more opaque and problematic. If culture is a lever of control it requires careful and erudite research to enable a complete understanding of its nature. The following chapters report and analyse the findings from the data collected from Templeton College.

Chapter 3 Research methodology and methods

Introduction

The studies of organizational culture are rooted in sociology, anthropology as well as management science and education. The reading outlined in the previous chapter draws on these different disciplines and therefore my own perspective is a mosaic of these interpretations. The investigation and reading that is recorded in the preceding chapter helped develop a clearer understanding of organizational culture and was the base from which the research design and research questions emerged. It was clear at an early stage that it was necessary to define carefully the parameters of the study. There are many interesting dimensions of organizational culture that were beyond the capacity of the present study. For example the impact on organizational culture of students and indeed the impact of culture on the students is an intriguing area of research. However, the inclusion of 'customer' influence also places additional strains on measurement and data collection. Thus one consideration was to narrow the inquiry and to keep a focus on the core issues of the study.

This chapter records how the research developed and begins with a review of methodology and comments on the issue of bias. The research questions are then introduced and citations of other research seek to legitimate the methods chosen. This discussion leads into the reasons why specific research methods were chosen.

The Research Methodology and Design

The study of a human ecology is one of the most difficult areas of science. As noted in chapter 1 the research into organizational culture presents significant challenges for the researcher. The overall approach taken is qualitative and therefore the study has a hermeneutic character. Qualitative and quantitative techniques have been used in an attempt to capture both depth and breadth. Stake (2000) suggests there is no agreed definition of case study and I borrow his term 'instrumental case study' (p437) to describe this study. This research is eclectic and combines a number of different research methodologies. The bulk of the data has to be derived from human participants and is then refracted through the subjective stance of the researcher. Although the research also has a quantitative strand the problems of interpretation, construct validity and generalisation, *inter alia*, remain.

Qualitative research is primarily used to answer questions that begin with *what* or *how* (Creswell, 1998). A central issue for the current study is '*what* is the nature of organizational culture' and '*how* does this manifest itself in a FE context'. For logistical reasons the detailed investigation took place in one college and therefore the research has the character of a case study. As in other research projects, time and resources cf. Muijs (2004) have impacted on methodology as well as data collection. The limitations of time and costs were among the reasons for using a case study approach although it is recognised that this has reduced the validity of generalisations. Consideration was given to developing a 'multi-site' case-study but it was deemed that this would only be valid if

a full replication of the current approach was undertaken. The contextual issues of place and time are a problem for all research and are no less significant in this research than in any other. As reported in the next chapter the case study college had recently experienced merger and therefore this is a further limitation on the external validity of the study. For these reasons it was clear from the outset of the research that a cautious approach would be needed to generalise from the case study findings to the wider FE community. Indeed some researchers question the possibility of generalisations drawn from one case to another (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Conversely Valsiner (1986) asserts that,

‘the study of individual cases has always been the major (albeit often unrecognised) strategy in the advancement of knowledge about human beings’ (p. 11).

Because little previous work has been undertaken on the nature of organizational culture within colleges of further education this study should be seen as an initial exploratory enquiry. There is certainly scope for further research to identify the similarities between and/or the uniqueness of colleges of further education. To develop robust claims data from a number of cases would be a much more reliable basis to generalise into the whole sector of FE.

Case study research has been defined by Yin (1984) as,

‘an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used’ (p. 23).

The current study has an epistemological challenge in defining and identifying the ‘phenomenon’ to be investigated and this amplifies the risks of researcher bias. Selection

of the data for study is informed to some extent from the literature and work of other researchers, outlined in the previous chapter. The researcher does not claim any positivistic truths but claims that the study exposes, investigates and suggests important dimensions of culture that need to be present to claim that a recognisable culture exists within the case study institution, Templeton College. As mentioned above the context of the phenomenon is recognised as a limitation of the current approach.

The case study is used to describe an investigation that seeks to gain insights and develop a better understanding of the issue of culture in FE. Further support for the use of a case study approach was found in Brunetto (2001), who cites Pettigrew, 1990,

‘Case study analysis is gaining acceptance as a legitimate methodology in the study of organizations, especially in examining the dynamic of the interaction of internal and external forces affecting organizational processes’ (Brunetto, p.471).

Also Bryman (1989) claims that,

‘Some of the classic studies in organizational research have derived from the detailed investigation of one or two organizations’ (p. 170).

Whilst the case study approach has limitations, especially in relation to external validity, it also has some advantages. The detailed study of a human ecology in a temporal space allows the researcher to review, triangulate and refine understandings during repeated observations and interactions. There is a requirement, recognised in this research, for multiple methods of enquiry and these are discussed in the following sections of this chapter.

The researcher is a practitioner within the college therefore the case study also has an ethnographic dimension. Immersed in the daily operation of the college it is difficult for an individual to become completely aware of preference and prejudice in the determination of methodology, research questions, as well as the collection and interpretation of data. The current research deals with beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of shared values and therefore there are complex issues of interpretation. The researcher was allowed free access to data and very few specific individuals declined to participate. The senior managers of the case study college also supported the enquiry with their time and access to information.

The research cannot claim objectivity but one can argue that few, if any, methods of research can claim complete objectivity. Even the experimental approach to research is biased by the questions asked as well as epistemological issues of what counts as knowledge. It is argued that even within experimental methodology the choice of research instruments is also a source of subjective bias (Ottosson, 2003). Further Hammersley (1999) claims that assumptions made by researchers ‘...shape every aspect of their work in fundamental ways’ (p. 3). Conventional wisdoms in qualitative research deny any claim for value free knowledge and lay greater emphasis on the recognition of bias and potential bias.

The legitimacy of knowledge is a central issue in all qualitative studies and given the constraints outlined above the approach taken here is ‘constructivist’. Therefore a further

aspect of the current investigation is the development of theory from the evidence – grounded theory. Merriam (1998) says in grounded theory the researcher, ‘assumes an inductive stance and strives to derive meaning from the data a theory that emerges from or is ‘grounded’ in, the data’ (p.17). Deriving meaning from the data is one of the major research challenges.

As a long serving teacher at Templeton College it is impossible to form perceptions that can claim to be unbiased. As an ‘insider’ my perspectives and interpretations inevitably contain bias. It is in cognizance of these risks that care was taken in the selection of research methods. The study is essentially hermeneutic although my own inclination is towards a notion that all science and especially social science is interpretive. The topics of study chosen by the scientist and researcher are filtered through the lens of perception, an intrinsic interpretation of the world. Furthermore, in the case of this particular study, there are no agreed dimensions of culture, see chapter 2, which can be easily measured. But as a practitioner-researcher I have adopted an approach that seeks to avoid what are called type 1 errors; rejecting the null hypothesis. I am not expecting to discover ‘truths’ but I expect to learn and share understandings of a complex human phenomenon with others who seek to explain some of the mysteries of our social world.

In reviewing, defining and classifying my ‘research stance’ I have also considered the extent to which this research could be defined as ‘action research’. The participatory aspect of my involvement, both a source of strength and weakness, is a key element of action research. However, I have ultimately rejected this classification in that the current

research cannot intrinsically contribute to improvement or the resolution of specific problems; attributes that are fundamental to action research.

The deliberations regarding the research design and methodology led to the formulation of a set of research principles. The specific problem of matching data collection to the research questions represents a critical aspect of the research process that will determine the quality of the final considerations. Issues of quality are an area of contestation in the research community;

‘there are no explicitly agreed standards regarding what constitutes quality in qualitative research evaluations’ (Spencer et al., 2003).

The following sections record how in this study an attempt has been made to produce a reliable and valid outcome. It has been my endeavour to make my research fulfil five requirements; the four guiding principles contained in Spencer, 2003

1. **contributory** in advancing wider knowledge or understanding
2. **defensible in design** by providing a research strategy which can address the evaluations questions posed;
3. **rigorous in conduct**
4. **credible in claim** (Spencer et al., p.6)

The fifth principle is transparency of interpretation. This has been added in cognisance of the issue of bias and is discussed below.

The Research Questions

The extension of ‘managerialism’ in Templeton College, and most other FE colleges, is evidenced by imported functions from the private sector. For example marketing departments now co-ordinate advertisements and student recruitment. The American Marketing Association defines marketing as,

‘the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives’ (AMA, 2006).

But the above demonstrates that college marketing departments cannot carry out the same role as in the private sector. Colleges have virtually no scope to conceive of new products. Section 2 of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act sets out the courses that will attract funding. Regional and local advisory committees largely determine pricing. Promotion should stay within the limits of giving attractively packaged information. Promoting courses beyond this risks replication of the ‘miss-selling’ that has occurred, and been heavily condemned, in the UK financial services industry. This small example serves to illustrate the importation of private sector management techniques central to the development of ‘managerialism’. Since the early 1980s the idea that ‘organizational culture’ is an ingredient of success has appeared in organizational and management literature. As mentioned in chapter 2 the Peters and Waterman (1982) pot boiler led to an industry in the promotion of positive cultures in the workplace. Portending the possibility of the migration of this concept to colleges of FE this research asks, ‘does organizational culture exist in colleges of further education?’

The central research questions are therefore:

What is culture?

How can it be defined?

What does the literature reveal about organizational culture in the private and public sectors?

Does the concept of 'organizational culture' exist in English FE colleges?

How does the evidence from the college compare to other organizations?

Do differences make a 'difference'? (specifically on important performance variables and measures).

Issues in Research Design

The research design paid due regard to ethical issues and the BERA Research Code of Practice was used as the standard of conduct for the research. A form was drawn for participants in the research to sign to acknowledge their informed consent to participate. A letter explaining the nature of the questionnaire was also written and this is shown in Appendix 1. The nature and purpose of the research was described and assurances of anonymity and confidentiality were offered. In all cases no coercion or persuasion to participate was used. However, as reported below, the administration of the research in practice fell short of the original expectations.

The study of organizational culture is essentially an attempt to expose underlying employee beliefs, some of which may be unknown to the participants. The research requires both depth, to expose underlying sentiment, and breadth to gauge the degree of

unity amongst groups of employees. Mackenzie (1995) used a cross-section of staff; she cites Kinnear and Taylor (1991) who described this approach as 'purposive sampling' (p.72). Templeton College is a large organization operating on three main sites with over 1000 employees. The logistics of the research was a major factor in the decision not to include data from students. A precedent for this decision was found in Helms and Stern (2001) whose review of cultural perceptions in hospitals ignored the impact of patients. In many other studies of organizational culture the impact of 'clients' were omitted, cf Mackenzie (1995), Peters and Waterman (1982) et al. In the final chapter of this research there is a discussion on the relevance and potential importance of the inclusion/exclusion from cultural studies of the client group, students.

The procedure and practice of the primary research is contained in the following sections. The current structure of Templeton College on three sites had an impact on research design. It was necessary to select samples that covered the three main sites. Fortunately the functional divisions of the college roughly mirrored the geographic dispersion. The School of Construction is sited near to the main campus in its specialist accommodation. The engineering departments, mechanical and vehicle, are located at the Woodside campus, three miles away from the central campus. Woodside also houses most of the School of Social and Health Studies. It was necessary to visit this site on many occasions to collect the necessary data.

The details of the data collection methods are reported below. In summary the quantitative strand of data collection relied on the completion of 60 item questionnaire

that is discussed in the following section. The questionnaire results were entered in to SPSS (v12) for analysis. To support data collection, my own study also includes 20 semi-structured interviews with a cross section of staff, including the Principal. The list of interviewees, by job role, is shown in Appendix 2.

Twenty semi-structured interviews represented the minimum acceptable number of interviews. This form of data collection offers rich data and can lay credible claim to accessing a better understanding of employee perceptions at Templeton College. However, delays and time constraints resulted in this relative small number of interviews. The interviews proved a fascinating and rich source of data. Many staff were eager to tell their 'stories' although some more senior personnel gave a more sanitised view of the college. The body language was sometimes guarded and at times felt like the 'official' story of the college. Undoubtedly other staff took the opportunity to unpack long held grievance about college managers or the state of further education in general. A more detailed review of the data and data collection is contained in the following section.

Methods of Data Collection

The Questionnaire

One fortunate coincidence was that the college commissioned a survey of its own in July 2004, see below. This allowed a useful source of triangulation as well as a source of cultural evidence per se. The college's survey was supported by my own questionnaire.

My first intention was to construct my own questionnaire but my investigations revealed that a number of cultural questionnaires are already in existence. Cameron and Quinn (1999) have produced the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) that contains 24 items in 6 sections. The questionnaire asks respondents to rank items in each section out of 100. The device also asks respondents to give their view of the current state of the organization and then their ideal or preferred characteristics of the organization; a total of 48 items. The device could not be sent to respondents as a careful explanation would be needed in a face to face situation. Because of time and cost limitations I wanted to have a questionnaire that could, if necessary, be administered by post. The OCAI also contained the disadvantage of a non standard system of ranking. Although the scale of 1 to 100 suggests a consistent system of measurement individuals may have different perceptions of ranking within these parameters.

The Denison organizational culture survey tool was chosen to use as the questionnaire base (Denison, 2004). This instrument was chosen for a number of reasons. Denison recognises that culture consists of underlying beliefs, values and assumptions which is similar to the view I have taken in chapter 3. Denison (2004) uses a 60 item questionnaire. The questions reflect Denison's view that organizations demonstrate high levels of four cultural traits; involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. Each trait is divided into three 'indices', as shown below.

Cultural Trait	Index
Involvement	Empowerment
	Team orientation
	Capability development
Consistency	Core values
	Agreement
	Coordination and integration
Adaptability	Creating change
	Customer focus
	Organizational learning
Mission	Vision
	Strategic direction and intent
	Goal and objectives

Each index is further subdivided into five question items. In total therefore the questionnaire contains 60 items and runs to five pages. The questionnaire length was one of the difficult dilemmas facing the research. Mackenzie (1995) records that she used a 76 item questionnaire that took 20 minutes to complete. Lee and Yu (2004) used the organization culture profile (OCP) – a Q-sort of 54 cultural values. The researchers reported the efficacy of this tool although their sample was small (70) and was composed of senior managers. It seems that many cultural surveys inevitably contain a large number of items. Reducing questionnaire items risked missing critical cultural indicators. The whole purpose of the survey approach was to cover a wide cross section of the college and a broad range of pertinent issues. There remained the danger that a long pen and paper questionnaire would hurt the response rate. The section below, the research story, reports the practical consequences of using this device. The individual questions also

captured issues that I felt were important. For example the issue of authority and power was captured in empowerment and capability development. Some of the original questions were replaced with items that had greater pertinence to FE issues and the particular circumstances of Templeton College. For example in the customer focus index item 40 was reconstructed as; 'We believe that seeing students as customers helps to improve our performance' (questionnaire). This item captures traces of the wider changes in the external environment that have impacted on colleges and other public sector organizations.

The Organizational Culture Survey (OCS), compiled by Denison Consulting, is also a tried and tested device used in both the public and private sectors in the United States. As a first step I contacted Denison Consulting and, after giving reassurances that the data collection would only be used for academic research, permission was given to use the OCS instrument. Although the OCS survey items have integrity of their own some adaptations were made to fit the circumstances of Templeton College. A small pilot study was undertaken with five colleagues and further adaptations were made. There was some discussion about construct validity and the language style of the questionnaire. For example item 22, 'There is a 'strong' culture', was eventually restored to the questionnaire. The item is limited by construct validity but it is presumptuous to make too many assumptions about what issues may or may not be understood by respondents. Respondents were asked to ignore questions that they felt were inappropriate and interestingly this was not a question ignored by many. However the response rate per se does not validate the item. A number of other items were changed but it is recognised

that issues of language are critical to the validity of the data and therefore construct validity remains a potential weakness of this instrument.

It did become clear that ideally two different questionnaires could have been used at different points in time. This approach may have captured beliefs that were stronger or more persistent. Time and logistical constraints made this difficult however and the idea was not pursued. It would have been possible to code questionnaires completed by the same individual, preserving anonymity, but access to respondents created some problems and repeating the questionnaire would have exacerbated these difficulties. The questions were offered by Denison in MS Excel and I decided to use a Likert scale without an opportunity for 'don't know' or 'neutral'. The essential purpose of the questions was to access underlying beliefs; therefore feelings and perceptions of working life were captured by this instrument. Where possible respondents were reminded that their view was important and the omission of a neutral response removed the 'soft' option and forced respondents to a decision. The amended questionnaire is shown in Appendix 3.

Although potentially expensive in time and resource a census approach was originally adopted. The personnel department of the college produced a list of employees in each section. Large envelopes were used to store the appropriate number of questionnaires and several packages were needed for the larger departments and sections. The original copies were coded for each section corresponding to the list from the personnel department. The original intention was to use staff training days in December 2004 to distribute the instrument. These occasions bring together most college employees for 2

days of staff development activity. This was not possible however, due to personal reasons, and a significant dilemma arose.

It was decided to send teachers in one department a covering letter, explaining the purposes of the questionnaire, and a pre-addressed reply envelope. The postal experiment using the Humanities School had a very poor response rate 14.8%. This meant that I would only receive 150 completed questionnaires across the college, less than 16%. It was clear that the best approach was a face to face meeting with college employees and using personal contact with colleagues. I tried therefore to ask departmental heads if I could attend staff meeting and allow 10 minutes for the questionnaire completion. Not all heads were happy to do this as time for their meetings was limited. Where this method was used (2 from 10) returns were much higher. The numbers attending meetings were significantly below the total establishments of the sections however. In these cases copies were left with the head of department to issue to non-attendees but again response rates were very low. This also meant that some loss of control was suffered. The conditions in which some questionnaires were completed were not known. In the postal experiment it was possible to raise respondent awareness to ethical issues. A letter was included explaining confidentiality and the nature of the research. Those heads of school who allowed the questionnaire to be completed felt pressurised for time. Thus a short explanation of the research was given. The voluntary nature of research participation was mentioned. Thus not all attendees at the meetings completed the questionnaires. Where colleagues offered to pass questionnaires to

colleagues the ethical covering letter was included but again there was no effective control of the process.

In the face-to-face meetings interesting behaviour was noted as some colleagues left the room, others sat impassively and a small minority completed the questionnaire by ticking all 'agree' responses. In the School of Media some participants were critical of the questions, one colleague, in particular, spent most of the time criticising the questionnaire and delayed the start of her schools staff meeting. A small number of questionnaires were returned with a significant number of missing items or suspicious patterns of response. This was usually all 'agree' despite the negative nature of some responses. But generally meeting staff proved the most effective way to obtain satisfactory returns. Where access to staff meeting was not possible other strategies were used.

To capture more data questionnaires were issued to staff in dining areas and lounges and respondents were asked to self-complete the question relating to their work area. This gave rise to staff using non-formal titles of their work areas, such as 'the workshop', 'social care', 'young mothers', 'engineering' etc. Because the questionnaire had been designed for guided completion its self-administration led to some data loss. Participants work area became so unreliable it was dropped from the study.

Towards the end of May 2005 the target number had not been reached so it was decided to approach teacher trainers at the college. Some 30 questionnaires were completed by teachers undertaking training. One major thrust of government policy is to increase the

percentage of qualified staff in colleges. Thus Templeton College was training large numbers of its own staff, some with many years of teaching experience at the college. However, from the research view this had the potential effect of skewing the data collection towards new entrants or to those teachers who are unqualified. Once again not all respondents identified their school or department in a way that matched the list from personnel. Thus this data, school/department, was not used for any analysis because it was too unreliable. Where school/department was not clear the entry was recorded as 'missing'; thus for this item a significant number of 'missing' items (50/24.6%) are recorded. Fortunately no other major problems arose. It should be mentioned however that the ethical principles of the research may also have been compromised. Where colleagues offered to pass the questionnaire to other colleagues it was not possible to monitor whether the written ethical reassurances were distributed alongside the questionnaire or how independently the questionnaire had been completed. However, a relatively small number of questionnaires (less than 5%) were completed in this way. It was decided that the integrity of the research had not been compromised fatally.

The original target number of responses was 400 but this was reduced to 200 as data collection consumed significant amounts of time. As reported in the following chapter a final total of 203 was achieved, representing 21.4% of the college staff. Personal visits to different sections of the college was a successful strategy although in the case of teachers response rates tended to be low as it was difficult to find times where staffrooms were fully occupied. The total return rate from the questionnaire is however sufficiently robust to enable its use in the study. The results of the questionnaire were analysed using SPSS

(v12). The use of statistical interrogation of the data was limited by the level of measurement of the data. The Denison items were coded to enable analysis of ordinal data but the absence of significant amounts of interval or scale data reduces the range of tests that can be completed.

The QPD Staff Survey July 2004

This independent survey sponsored by the college represents a fortuitous contribution to data collection and provides an important source of triangulation. The college commissioned an outside company, QPD Services Ltd to conduct a staff survey. The five-page questionnaire contained 45 questions, divided into seven categories and also allowed participants to add comments. This survey uses a rating system to score staff perceptions. The rating score was constructed by assigning values (1 and 0.5) to the responses 'Agree Completely' and 'Agree Mostly'. The aggregation of these scores was multiplied by 100 and divided by the number of responses. Thus the measurement is a weighted percentage; where a rating of 100 is equal to full agreement and 0 complete disagreement. Missing items or those who answered 'not applicable' were excluded from the rating calculation. The rating score was used as a comparison with other aggregates, for example departments against the whole college average. The data analysis company was also able to provide data comparing Templeton College's results with national averages. Thirty-five other similar surveys had been undertaken sampling 8,827 college employees (QPD, 2004). The data were reported in various formats; gender, site (the three main sites plus category 'outreach'), ethnicity, time employed, job role, age,

contract type (full/part time) and department. The four main sections relevant to the current study were headed:-

- The college, our purpose, structure and direction;
- Communications;
- Self-assessment and planning, and;
- Support to achieve your role.

The survey items have been used in other schools and colleges and therefore there is prima facie evidence of construct validity. The Templeton College survey also has few missing items except for those questions that are directed at one group of employees. For example the college used a 'log' system for continuous professional development of teachers. Because non-teacher staff did not adopt a similar style of staff development this question was not appropriate to them. Thus the valid responses for this item fell from 306 to 147.

The Staff Interviews

Multi-stage probability sampling was used to select the sample. The inclusion of the college principal is an obvious source of bias but this is justified because of his position. The proximity between leader and culture has already been noted, cf Schein, (1992). For the remaining 19 interviews a decision was made to split the sample into a ratio of 12:7, teaching to support staff. The category 'teaching' includes heads of schools and 'support staff' includes all other non-teaching employees. This decision is justified, in a relatively

small sample, to reduce the opportunity for bias. The 12 teachers or 'academics' according to the college's classification include 2 heads of schools. This is an over representation but is again justified because of the uniqueness of their position. Heads of school may have, or may be expected to have, a leadership role and also may have access to management processes invisible to other members of staff. These interviewees are also able to view college life from a split perspective; as teachers and as managers. Their position in the hierarchy also may reveal how strategic decisions are operationalised and whether the decision-making processes recognise cultural influence. The heads of school would also be able to construct their views in the light of merger experiences; one head had a background in Woodside College and the other was a Central College appointee. The physical location of the heads reflected their original appointment.

The 10 other teachers were chosen to reflect the working divisions of the college. Although selected at random it was recognised that a short list approach was preferable. The experience of the questionnaire had shown that not all staff were willing to be involved in the research. Thus a source of bias is that interview participants were volunteers. The decision was made not to deliberately select teachers on grounds of gender or race. The gender division is resolved partly by the subject specialisms; hair and beauty exclusively female and engineering exclusively male. In areas, such as humanities and business a random selection was made that ignored gender. The small percentage of non-white British respondents in the questionnaire survey reflects the low representation of minority groups in the college workforce. Similarly support staff were

selected randomly with a majority (4) from the central college campus reflecting the actual distribution of these employees.

The interviews were conducted after the completion of the questionnaire surveys. The structure of the interviews was informed by issues arising from analysis of the two surveys. The purpose of this qualitative approach was to record greater depth. A real challenge to the research was to develop reliable and valid processes that would expose employees' values and beliefs. Mackenzie (1995) used metaphorical analysis in her attempt to resolve the same problem. She asked respondents to, 'select an animal which most accurately represented the organization's key features' (p. 74).

This innovative approach was rejected because it did not appear to resolve the difficult issue of data analysis. Once interviewees, for example, choose a metaphor for the organization there is no test of the meaning behind the choice. It was clear from the start of this study that the concept of culture would pose challenges to the data collection process. The central issue lies around the meaning given to informants' responses. The translation of informants' words, by the researcher and indeed the perception of this interpretation by the reader, pose serious issues in all ethnographic studies (Van Maanen, 1988). In a study that attempts to expose 'underlying values and beliefs', that may not be known to the informant, data analysis is even more problematic. The elimination of bias also became an important factor at this stage of the research.

There are no completely reliable processes for analysing interview data (Alexiadou, 2001). The construction of meaning from informants' comments or even the use of quotes focuses attention on researcher integrity and skill. The decision was made to select five main themes in the interview sessions. An alternative approach would have been to select themes that emerged from the data. This would have allowed a less structured set of interviews but would have made the establishment of meaning 'behind the talk' (Alexiadou, p.53) less reliable and more wide ranging. Making interviewees feel at ease would be more likely to produce useful data and keeping the range of issues relatively small would be a more reliable approach. The cultural themes were:

Teamwork

Students as 'customers'

Output/product

Power/control

Leadership

This set of variables captures some potentially important dimensions of culture and also allows some triangulation with the questionnaire data. The issue of validity and reliability became a taxing and time consuming problem at this stage of the research. The danger of 'interpretive omnipotence' (Van Maanen, p.51) occasioned a whole range of anxieties regarding the analysis of responses. A decision was taken to use quotes as much as possible that would enable some transparency of interpretation, which meets the fifth principle of practice adopted for the study. The reader/s would be able to share the

interpretive decision of the researcher. This would not render the analysis of the interviews completely uncontaminated of bias but appeared to be a better alternative.

The semi-structured interviews also used scenarios to give interviewees the opportunity to express an opinion on a range of issues. For example interviewees were asked whether a dress code would be worthwhile, or whether they would be comfortable if their children attended the college. It was felt that the use of vignettes would give better access to underlying beliefs and values. Some of the staff questions were also put to the principal of the college although because of the latter's leadership role some specific questions related to leadership and culture were altered for that interview.

All personnel selected agreed to the interviews which were conducted in empty classroom or offices. Sixteen and a half hours of staff interviews were recorded. One interesting pattern that emerged from the interviews is that the more senior the personnel, generally, the longer they tended to talk. This also caused significant burdens of transcription. Some interviewees expressed concern over confidentiality that for me was a small indicator of a cultural dimension. After giving reassurances at the start of the interviews and stressing that my questions were to elicit 'perceptions' of the college some interviewees below the rank of head of school were visibly uneasy with some answers.

Other Methods of Data Collection

College documentation in various forms was interrogated; this included policy documents, minutes of various committees and internal and external communications. Finally my own research log recorded readings and data based on observations during the period of the research. Interpretation of the latter requires particular caution as the emic perspectives of the researcher are highly value laden. Keeping the research log was however a highly significant and useful addition to the research. From time to time this served as useful means of cross-referencing and record keeping.

Conclusions

This chapter has given a flavour of the research methods and the story of the research. A number of the themes alluded to above will be reflected in the analysis and discussion that follows in the remaining chapters. The general feeling from the interviewees was that staff were happy to talk and unload some of their strongly held feelings about the college and their colleagues. There was a general tone resignation and negativity with very few colleagues below senior management expressing enthusiasm for the future. But this interpretation must be handled cautiously as the sample size was very small.

There were many aspects of data collection that on hindsight could have been improved. A greater number of questionnaires would have enhanced the validity of the research. But time constraints were a significant limitation. Some heads of school gave oral

support for attendance at staff meeting but felt that particular meetings were 'inappropriate'. Thus as reported this useful medium for questionnaire completion was under exploited. Although the research had the approval of the college principal in retrospect a higher profile may have boosted data collection. Email and the college newsletter were used to publicise the questionnaire and the study but promotion at full staff meetings may have been helpful. It is worth recording that the principal gave full support to my research and was open and responsive to a wide range of questions.

The following chapter describes how the data from the above were analysed.

Chapter 4 Data analysis and the cultural identity of Templeton College

Introduction

This chapter begins with a review of the creation of Templeton College, the 'site' of the research, by merger. The chapter continues with an explanation of how the data were interrogated and describes the statistical tests that were performed. The chapter describes the processes used to determine the validity and reliability of the two quantitative data sets; QPD data and the questionnaire. Some additional data were used from college sources and these are incorporated into the study. A judgement is offered that the sample populations are reasonably reliable representations of the parent population. This is followed by a more detailed analysis of each data set. A range of descriptive statistics has been used followed by tests for association. The text describes the significance and value of these processes. The analysis then switches to the qualitative data.

Interpretation is supported by quotes from interviewees drawing the two strands of enquiry, quantitative and qualitative data, together in to a coherent analysis. Throughout the chapter analysis of the data is connected to the cultural themes discussed in chapter 2. The chapter concludes with a summary of the evidence of the cultural identity of Templeton College.

The College

The 'site' of the research is an English college of FE, Templeton College, which was formed by the merger, in 2002, of Woodside College and Central College. The college operates from 3 main sites. The centrally located main campus is supplemented by a

specialist facility for teaching construction that is in accommodation 300 metres away from the main site. Since September 2006 the college has begun a phased move into purpose built accommodation. This will enable the college to operate as a single organizational entity on one site. Three miles to the west of the city the third campus, Woodside, is the second main teaching centre. The college also has a number of outreach centres that tend to be small community based provision. An annexe of the college offers cost recovery courses to local businesses on its own site 1.5 kms to south of the city centre. The physical environment, as well as the geography of the three main sites, is likely to impact on organizational culture of the college.

Woodside College was opened in 1969 and was built on a greenfield site 3 miles to the west of the city centre. The college was built in response to heavy demand for FE places and many of the 'new' staff transferred from the Central College. By the year 2000 the college had developed 11 'outreach' centres and boasted a national training provision for the passenger and commercial vehicle (PCV) industry. It was hoped that this provision would achieve 'centre of excellence' (CoVE) status. To date, July 2004, this has not materialised despite the fact that newly constructed workshops have been built. In 2000/01 the college achieved 11,095 student enrolments and had an income of £11.9m. The college employed 170 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers, 107 of whom were full-time. There were 177 FTE support staff, 147 of whom were full-time.

Central College was opened in 1935 and has a central location approximately half a mile from the centre of the city. In 1986 a purpose built training facility for the constructive

trades industry was built some 600 metres from the main campus. Since the merger this provision has achieved CoVE status in a joint bid with a neighbouring college. The college employed 126 FTEs of whom 86 were full-time. There were 137 FTE support staff, 105 of whom were full-time. In 2000/01 the college achieved 9,161 student enrolments and had an income of £11.5m. This college has a history of bouts of severe financial problems that have appeared since 1991. The most recent deficit in 2000/01 was forecast at 'nearly £4 million' (College Merger document, Appendix 2, p.6).

The college's merger proposal document lists 44 providers of post-16 education and training including 19 schools' sixth forms. There exists a tension between competition and cooperation. The development of quality courses with effective progression routes and high success rates should increase demand, a pull that is likely to see a reduced enrolment for other/another provider/s. Having created a quasi market for post-16 education the government is now seeking to 'rationalise' provision to prevent duplication. This is a tacit recognition that 'market forces' probably do not reallocate resources in the same way as in the private sector. There is clear imperative from central government to rationalise provision and develop differentiation and excellence (thus Centres of Vocational Excellence, CoVEs). These forces are strongly evident in the 16-19 sector of the college's work. The merged college attracts 43% (c) of the 16-19 cohort and is clearly the largest single provider in the urban area where it is situated.

The merger of the colleges is an important consequence of the funding constraints in English FE and has been an important strategy for survival in many areas of the country.

It should be noted that the merger proceeded with the support of the LSC and indeed could not have progressed without it. Funding support from the LSC is recognised as a critical component of successful mergers (CEI, 2003). The merger was effectively part of local rationalisation of further education and a de facto rescue of one of the colleges. The term 'take-over' may in fact be a better way to describe the combination of the colleges and this is reflected in the fact that only one senior manager from Central College remained in the post-merger institution. A further impetus to the current study was that the relative success of mergers is held to be dependent on the successful marriage of different cultures (CEI, 2003). Despite the fact that cultural differences are recognised problems of merging institutions it is difficult to find evidence of a robust management strategy to ameliorate this problem. The FEFC reported in 2000 that,

'A number of institutions indicated that addressing 'cultural differences' between institutions was one of the most difficult and time-consuming aspects of merger and one with which they were continuing to deal' (FEFC, p.10).

Similarly the CEI (2003) report asserts that college culture differences, 'was always underestimated and often ignored in the planning stage' (CEI, p.25).

As discussed earlier the incorporation of colleges in 1993 was in part the result of general dissatisfaction with the performance of public sector organisations. Groundwater-Smith et al. (2002) claim that the introduction of standards and 'performativity', had two purposes – to raise standards and also to reform the teaching profession.' These developments contribute to what is known as the 'audit society' that has created the 'managerialist' discourse.

'The efficient operation of the market is fostered through the combination of legislative controls and internal institutional mechanisms, notably performance

indicators and inspection, which ostensibly provides consumers with a basis for choice, but more importantly managerial imperatives' (ibid. p. 351).

Groundwater-Smith and her co-author Sachs (2002) posit that the rise of managerialism and its concomitant regulations has undermined trust, which they regard as the 'social glue' of organisation. There exists a tension between the quest for the achievement of measurable performance outcomes and the more complex and nuanced role of teaching. Thus 'professionalism' in the sector is constructed and reconstructed as the actors attempt to reconcile the often competing demands (Gleeson, 1999). Furthermore the merger perturbations were an additional influence on staff in a sector that has an unenviable record of poor industrial relations (Shain and Gleeson, 1999; Gleeson, 2001). Thus these forces, *inter alia*, are likely to impact on the perceptions, practices and professional agency of teachers in the merged college and may influence the set of shared values essential to the notion of organizational culture.

The combined college is the largest provider of FE in its urban location although 2 other FE colleges exist. One of these colleges is a specialist FE college catering for students with physical disabilities. The other general FE college is situated on the northern edge of the city. Templeton College is led by a principal whose recent background is in teaching but is also a qualified accountant. Leadership is an important component of culture, cf Schien (1992) and Senge (1996). Templeton College was subject to an OFSTED inspection in November 2003. The inspectors noted 'the strong leadership by governors and senior managers' (OFSTED, 2003). Partly as a result of the OFSTED report the college refined its organizational structure in July 2004. Since the summer of

2004 there has been a nine schools or departmental structure. The college is a general college of further education with 13272 students (2002/3). 17% of these students were fulltime and the remaining 83% part-time. Because many students enrolled for more than one qualification enrolments in 2002/3 stood at 22000.

Templeton College has a wide range of vocational provision including; construction, hairdressing and beauty therapy, passenger vehicle engineering, performing arts, music and media, and business and management studies. The college has a turnover of approximately £23m and 1053 staff. The table below gives a brief breakdown of employee numbers.

Table 1 Templeton College Staffing

Contract	Numbers	%	Role	Number	%
Full-time	401	38	Teaching	547	52
Part-time	652	62	Non-teaching	506	48
Total	1053	100		1053	100
Source: Templeton College Jan 2005					

In 2003-4 the college reported an operating surplus of £52,000 and an operational deficit of £395,000 in the following year. As a consequence of the financial outturn the college was seeking voluntary redundancies to stabilise its future financial position. The table below summarises the college finances.

Table 2 Templeton College Finances

Templeton College Finances 2004/5			
Income		Expenditure	
	£m		£m
Learning and Skills Council [LSC] (FE)	13.15 (60%)	Teachers' Pay	9.25 (41.5%)
LSC (Work-based Learning	2.50 (11%)	Non-Teaching Pay	6.07 (27.3%)
Higher Education (including fees)	1.05 (5%)	Other Expenditure	6.89 (30.9%)
Full Cost (fees) and other income	3.50 (16%)		
Tuition Fees	0.79 (4%)		
European Social Fund	0.56 (3%)		
Interest and Capital Grants	0.33 (1%)		

Although the provision is mostly FE, funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), see above, there is a substantial number of higher education courses (HE), including the relatively new foundation degrees. The college also collaborates with local secondary schools and has a number of 14-16 courses although these currently attract relatively small numbers. A predominantly male student population (53%) reflects the college's specialist areas of provision; construction and automotive engineering. 71% of the student cohort is white and 16% are from ethnic minorities; the college data reflects a significant 12% of students who omitted to declare their ethnicity. Templeton College has 'a large number of students from disadvantaged areas', (OFSTED, p.5).

The college has adopted the following mission statement,

'Responding to diversity; raising the standard; taking education further' (College Plans, 2004).

A central theme of the college, in common with other FE colleges, is to secure improvements in the trinity of FE goals; retention, achievement and attendance. The college plans are an important expression of the strategic aims of the college. The plans are key indicators of the leader's values and aspirations and are therefore one source of data for this organizational culture study.

Analysis of the quantitative data analysis

The QPD staff survey was completed by 306 staff and is a sufficiently sized sample for generalizations to the wider college population. 306 represents 32% of the college workforce.¹ This data are a useful source of triangulation for the validity of my own questionnaire. The data from the QPD survey do include college 'outreach' centres – small off-site teaching locations – these are not included in my questionnaire. The figure of 306 responses can be reduced to 284 [29.9% of the workforce] if the outreach centres are excluded. The questionnaire for this study achieved 203 [21.4% of the workforce] responses and is also sufficiently large enough to claim reliability. There were, as reported below, some differences between the samples collected by the two instruments. The QPD survey breakdown of teaching and non-teaching staff was 47.9% and 52% respectively. In my own questionnaire 59.1% of respondents were teachers and 40.9% were support staff. Information from the college asserts that 51.9% of staff are teachers and 48.1% non-teachers. This result was a little surprising as the impression during the data collection phase was that non-teaching staff were more accessible than teachers.

¹ This calculation assumes 950 as the total staff complement. This is the figure reported in the college Investors in People report November 2004. The college claims there is variation in this figure because of term-time demand for part-time and associate lecturers. Thus in other places in this study a different figure is reported. The college MIS system reports the total workforce as 984 (June 2005)

The distribution of staff between these two classifications contained in my study is therefore biased towards teaching staff and the difference is significant enough to warrant caveats on the generalizations offered.

The growth of non-teaching employees is adding impetus to managerialism. As reported previously there is sentiment in the college that would prefer uniform conditions of service removing a potential division between teaching and non-teaching employees. This is a development linked to the incorporation of the college and the consequential reduction in holiday entitlement for teaching staff. The link between the student calendar and the staff calendar was broken establishing a significant symbolic change.

The QPD survey recorded a male population of 39.9% and 60.1% for females. My own survey reported figures of 42.4% and 57.6%² for males and females respectively.

Although different age classifications were used by the two survey instruments, there was sufficient similarity to suggest reliability. For example the QPD recorded responses for staff over 51 years [30.6%] and this study recorded responses for the over 54 years [20.2%]; there is no *prima facie* indication of significant conflicts between the two data sets. Another difference between the two data sets concerned the evidence of ethnic diversity. The QPD responses were classified into 'white' [89.6%] and 'all other ethnic groups' [10.4%]. This study also found a very 'white' college – 92.6% and 7.4% for all other groups. Again there is no strong indication of significant difference between the data sets and the higher figure for non-white responses may be accounted for the inclusion of outreach centres in the QPD data set. One of the largest outreach centres is

² This figure does not sum to 100% because of 1 missing item (0.5%).

an Asian community centre. There was some variation in the tenure of staff, although again different classifications were used; QPD using four classifications compared to five used for this study. The two data sets for this item are summarised in the table below.

Table 3 Showing a comparison of data sets for the tenure of staff

	0 - 2 years	3 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	>11 years	
QPD	19.1%	24.5%	24.8%	31.6%	
	< 1 year	1 - 5 years	6 – 10 years	11-15 years	> 15 years
College data*	15.48%	47.56%	16.04%	9.38%	11.54%
(*MIS – June 2005)					
Culture Questionnaire	12.8%	29.1%	18.7%	14.3%	25.1%

Both the QPD survey and the survey for this study appear to include an over representation of long serving members of staff, as shown in Table 3 above. This variation cannot be excluded as a possible source of bias.

Table 4 Showing a comparison between reports of gender distribution at Templeton College

	Male	Female
QPD	39.9%	60.1%
College data*	45.1%	54.8%
(*MIS – June 2005)		
Culture Questionnaire	42.4%	57.6%

The QPD survey appears to over represent female respondents but the relationship between my own survey and college data lies within acceptable degrees of difference. This claim is supported by the college’s recognition that the total workforce count varies at different points in the year.

Table 5 Showing a comparison of data set reports of the age profile at Templeton College

QPD	16 – 30 years	31 – 40 years	41 – 50 years	>51 years	
	12.2%	22.1%	35.0%	30.6%	
College data*	< 30 years	31 - 40 years	41 – 50 years	51 – 60 years	> 60 years
(*MIS – June 2005)	15.8%	20.7%	28.8%	24.2%	10.3%
Culture Questionnaire	< 25 years	25 – 34 years	35 – 44 years	45 -54 years	> 54 years
	5.4%	14.8%	29.6%	29.1%	20.2%

As Table 5 shows the questionnaire used in the study uses a different classification of staff ages. This is unfortunate as it denies the possibility of corroboration with other data. In hindsight this anomaly could have been avoided and allowed a stronger case for the validity of the questionnaire data. The only observation that can be made is that a crude comparison does not seem to suggest a distorting difference between the data sets. The college data set did contain three missing items where no age was recorded. This does suggest that the college data collection may not be 100% accurate. Whilst this only represents 0.3% of the staff it does call into question the accuracy of other data. Small variations in data sets seem unlikely to damage the integrity of assumptions into the wider population of the college given these exigencies. Because of variations between the data set in the questionnaire and the population (of staff) it was decided to use data with $p \leq 0.1$. Although in places reference to data with statistical significance of $p < 0.5$ is described, and clearly indicated, it is deemed too unreliable for inferences to the wider community of staff. Reducing the test of significance to $p \leq 0.1$ when inferences were made to the wider population was also prudent given the level of measurement of the data. A much stronger association can be inferred where $p \leq 0.01$ and these data form the basis of generalisations.

In summary, there appears to be sufficient robustness in the questionnaire data to assume a reasonable extrapolation to the wider college population. Given the caveats above, with reference to levels of significance, the author is satisfied that useful evidence can be extracted from the data.

The QPD survey included an average set of ratings recorded from statistics from '8827 staff in 35 customers', (QPD Report, 2004). The staff's perceptions of the college were below the average in nearly all items, see Appendix 4. Items on communication, management effectiveness and consultation were particularly low. The evidence does not support an integrated culture. Strongly held shared values are likely to be a function of high quality communication. The principal of the college places high value on his personal involvement in communications. He employs a system of 'round Robins' where he visits different sections of the college. A number of interviewees referred to changes that have been put into place since the QPD results were published.

In addition to the questionnaire responses, 89 written comments were added by college employees. It was possible to classify the responses into 14 main categories. Other comments were made which could not easily fit any particular category. It may be that giving employees the opportunity to comment gives disgruntled employees an opportunity to express their feelings. Thus issues of bias cannot be excluded. The table below summarises the comments made by staff in the QPD survey. Some employees made a number of comments on several issues and others commented on single issues. It was not possible to classify all comments

Table 6 Summary of comments made by employees in the QPD staff survey July 2004

SUBJECT/ISSUE	Negative	Positive
Level of support	12	2
Computers	6	0
Cleanliness	7	0
Merger	5	0
Management	23	2
Service to students	2	2
Communications	20	0
Questionnaire	4	0
College Organization	1	0
Physical Conditions	4	0
Staff Development	3	0
Feeling Valued	1	0
New College	1	0
Pay	5	0
TOTALS	94	6

The comments highlight two specific areas that were also reported in the QPD survey data, namely management and communications. The rating score for items 8 to 14, communications, were all below 50. The lowest rating of all was for item 6; ‘Managers consult well with staff - 15’ (QPD Report, 2004).

This was 12 points below the average for colleges, with only 36% of respondents agreeing that management consultation was acceptable. Also 34.11% of respondents classified themselves as managers and rated this item at 28%. This suggests that managers recognized that communication within the college falls below their own expectations. On the other hand it could suggest that some managers feel they do not have access to information themselves and therefore appear to push the problem up the organizational hierarchy.

It is not surprising that communication was raised as an issue. The sector has been the subject of frequent policy change and as these macro changes are converted into action within the college high demands are placed on communication systems. In July 2005 the college appeared to recognise that its systems of communications needed to be reviewed. The college newsletter was renamed and its content revised. Like all management activity the college has to weigh costs against benefits but communication is a vital area of organizational life. When the formal systems of communication are ineffective there will be a corresponding increase in informal communications. In Templeton College the informal network is likely to bolster the negative feelings held by many staff. The most likely cause of that negativity is the recent history of the combined colleges.

The evidence is consistent with Etzioni's (1975) findings of ownership of objectives and position in the hierarchy. In many staff transcripts reference was made to principal's focus on external relationships of the college, particularly issues around the construction of a new college building (Staff transcripts).

At the level of measuring perceptions the report does construct a picture of Templeton College enjoying far less support from its staff than is typical in the sector. The data show that 81% of staff were in post at the time of the merger and it is possible that a residual impact of this upheaval has effected perceptions. However the college's OFSTED report found contradictory evidence to the views of staff and also reported that;

'The merger of [Central] College with [Woodside] College has been effectively and successfully completed' (paragraph 43, OFSTED).

This appears to deny that merger may have influenced staff perceptions. The OFSTED inspectorate also found that

‘Communication has been good and consultation with staff and stakeholders has been thorough. Staff morale is high’ (paragraph 43, OFSTED).

In fact the inspectors listed internal communications as a ‘key strength’ of the college.

This inconsistency is difficult to explain given the short time gap between the inspection and the QPD survey; nine months. The quantitative survey conducted by QPD may be deemed the more reliable of the two data sources. Although OFSTED inspectors are trained and act with integrity (OFSTED, 2001) they effectively have one week to form judgements about complex areas of educational practice in large institutions. The data for lesson sampling may be more accurate than data on organisational attributes such as communications. The OFSTED voice is a powerful one however and cannot be excluded from impacting on the overall culture of the college. This issue is discussed in the following chapter.

The QPD data were able to analyse staff perceptions on a departmental basis. Because of factors reported in the previous chapter the questionnaire data were unable to interrogate data at that level of analysis. Potentially this is important data. The professional division reflected in the departmental demarcations may reveal evidence of departmental sub-cultures. However the data from two of the 11 schools can be regarded as unsafe as only two and five responses were gathered from these curriculum areas.

There were some significant deviations from the average. In response to item 3 about the awareness of the work in other areas of the college the construction and vehicle engineering staff scored significantly below the average. This data may be accounted for by the physical isolation of these areas of work. Construction is taught in a separate annexe to the college and the majority of the vehicle engineering workshops are housed in units away from the main building at the Woodside campus.

Analysis of the Questionnaire

The final total of returned questionnaires was 203 and as reported above the data were deemed sufficiently reliable enough to form the basis of meaningful interpretation. A summary of the demographic data is shown below, in SPSS output form. The magnitude of data available to this study from the questionnaire, and from the qualitative data, is substantial and therefore only a small percentage of data can be included in the sections below.

Responses were assigned arbitrary values of 1 to 4; where 1 equalled strong agreement and 4 strong disagreement. This assignment was rearranged for negative questions, items 15, 24, 29, 34, 39, 43, 50 and 58, and these are shown in *italics*. Missing or spoiled responses (more than one selection) were assigned the value 9. Later in the analysis the missing items were removed for statistical examination because of this assignment and its risk of distorting some tests. Also gender was recoded as '1' and '2', male and female respectively, rather than the original '0' and '1' assignments because of the possible

problems of using the value 0 in statistical tests. In most of the following data numbers have been rounded to 1 or 2 places of decimals for ease and consistency of presentation. Not all percentages add to 100 owing to rounding and the impact of missing items. These variations are minor and have no impact on the validity of the study. The following tables and charts show a range of demographic data for the college.

Some of the tables do reveal anomalies. For example the job title ‘manager’. Some teaching staff may describe themselves as managers. This is another example of the symbolic change associated with incorporation and managerialism. In pre-incorporation times the term senior lecturer was in wide use. In Templeton College today the title ‘senior lecturer’ is rarely used and posts of responsibility are more likely to contain the word ‘manager’.

Table 7

Job Title					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Administrative Officer	20	9.9	9.9	9.9
	Senior Manager	5	2.5	2.5	12.3
	Teacher/Lecturer	120	59.1	59.1	71.4
	Head of School	5	2.5	2.5	73.9
	Support Worker	35	17.2	17.2	91.1
	Manager	15	7.4	7.4	98.5
	Other	1	.5	.5	99.0
	Missing	2	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	203	100.0	100.0	

Table 8

Tenure					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 1 year	26	12.8	12.8	12.8
	1 - 5 years	59	29.1	29.1	41.9
	6 - 10 years	38	18.7	18.7	60.6
	11 - 15 years	29	14.3	14.3	74.9
	More than 15 years	51	25.1	25.1	100.0
	Total	203	100.0	100.0	

Table 9

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 25 years	11	5.4	5.4	5.4
	25 - 34 years	30	14.8	14.8	20.2
	35 - 44 years	60	29.6	29.6	49.8
	45 - 54 years	59	29.1	29.1	78.8
	Over 54 years	41	20.2	20.2	99.0
	Missing	2	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	203	100.0	100.0	

Table 10

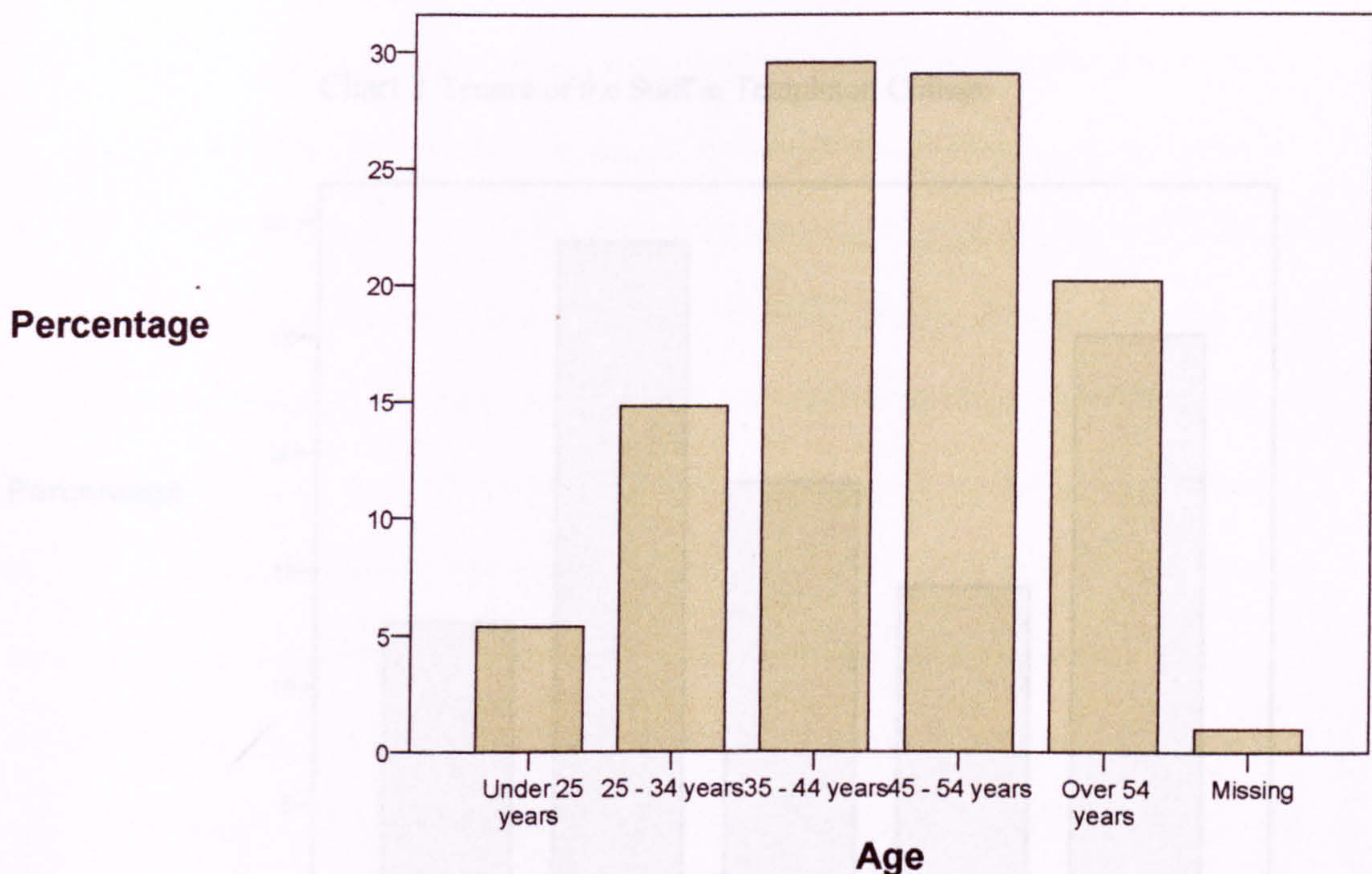
Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	85	41.9	41.9	41.9
	Female	117	57.6	57.6	99.5
	Missing	1	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	203	100.0	100.0	

Table 11

Ethnic Origin		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Asian - Indian	3	1.5	1.5	1.5
	White - European	188	92.6	92.6	94.1
	Asian - Pakistani	3	1.5	1.5	95.6
	White - non-European	6	3.0	3.0	98.5
	Other	2	1.0	1.0	99.5
	Missing	1	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	203	100.0	100.0	

The data show a very ‘white’ college with more than 20% of staff over 54 years, as shown in the chart below. Chart 2 shows the tenure of staff. The merger of the two colleges resulted in over 200 staff leaving the college (data from interview with principal).

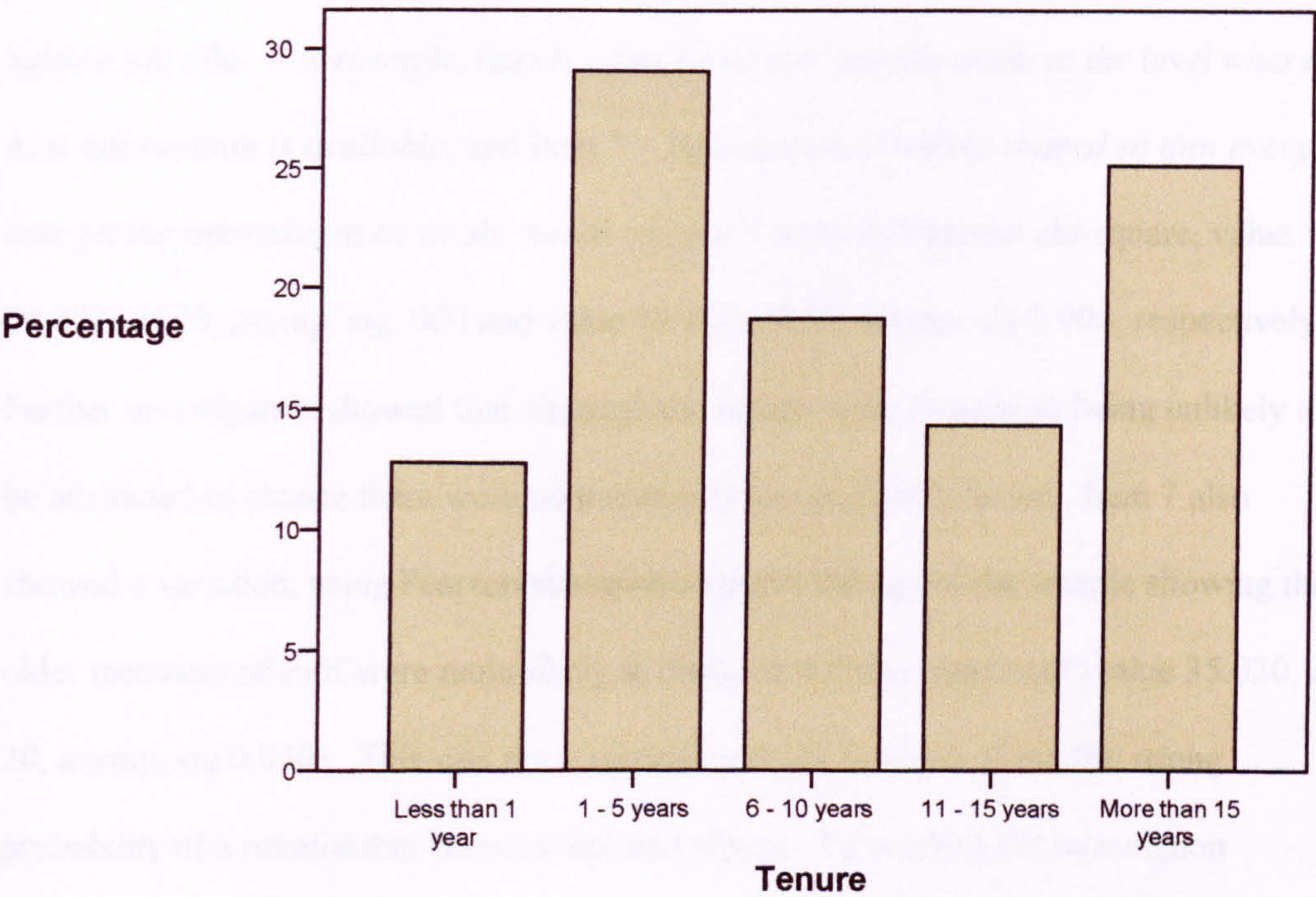
Chart 1 Showing Age Profile of Templeton College



The merger of the college had the effect of reducing staff in the over 54 category but there remains a bias towards an aging staff. There are a number of possible interpretations for this data. The merged college does enjoy greater financial robustness but it was formed from two colleges that were struggling for long term survival. The Central Campus was on the verge of bankruptcy as an independent unit. Although the erstwhile Woodside College could claim a healthier balance sheet it also had a pattern of staff reductions and cost cutting exercises. The staff who have remained in the college after merger, still a substantial majority, have a stoic attitude to change. In line with the wider community the trade union influence and membership have also diminished. From twenty years ago when both colleges could claim 90% of staff were members of a trade

union this has fallen to less than 50% in the combined college. Indeed in some staff rooms the trade union members are a clear minority.

Chart 2 Tenure of the Staff at Templeton College



Frequencies and cross tabulations were conducted as preliminary methods of data mining. Gamma and Pearson Chi-Square tests were conducted on all of the 60 items in the questionnaire. The items were cross tabulated against age, tenure, gender, and job classification. In these tests ‘tenure’ consistently showed as significant with a range of variables. But other interesting results emerged and those variables were deemed suitable for further investigation. Tests for association were conducted using Kendall’s tau b and Spearman’s rho; Pearson correlation was not conducted based on the assumption that the

data were unlikely to produce linear relations. The results for these investigations are reported below.

Analysis using Pearson chi-square did not always produce viable patterns of association. The following results were produced using cross-tabulations of the respective items against job title. For example, item 6 – *Decisions are usually made at the level where the best information is available*, and Item 7 – *Information is widely shared so that everyone can get the information he or she needs when it's needed* (Pearson chi-square, value 74.422; df 28; asymp. sig .000 and value 49.120; df 28; asymp. sig 0.008, respectively). Further investigation showed that although the results were flagged as being unlikely to be attributed to chance there were no patterns of association detected. Item 7 also showed a variation, using Pearson chi-square against the age of the sample showing that older members of staff were more likely to disagree with the statement (value 35.020, df 20, asymp. sig 0.020). This was not a surprising result however given the strong probability of a relationship between age and tenure. To confirm this association correlation tests were conducted on age and tenure data which confirmed the moderate to strong correlations, (Pearson correlation 0.401 at sig. 0.000). However when correlation tests were conducted it showed that age did not have a significant association with the results although tenure was significant (Kendall's tau b 0.158, sig, 0.009 and Spearman's rho 0.184, sig. 0.009). Although significant these outputs do suggest a relatively weak strength of association.

The consistent pattern of results for 'tenure' in the preliminary tests led to further investigations of this variable. The following two tables show the pattern of results when

data were correlated against age and tenure. As mentioned above, there is a strong association, and perhaps somewhat obvious, between length of service and age. But the following tables, inter alia, reveal that length of service at the college, a potential cultural phenomenon, has stronger associations with a wide range of variables.

Table 12 Showing ‘age’ correlated against Item 8³ from the questionnaire data

Correlations				
			Everyone believes that he or she can have a positive impact.	Age
Kendall's tau_b	Everyone believes that he or she can have a positive impact.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.126*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.039
		N	203	203
	Age	Correlation Coefficient	.126*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.039	.
		N	203	203
Spearman's rho	Everyone believes that he or she can have a positive impact.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.142*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.043
		N	203	203
	Age	Correlation Coefficient	.142*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	.
		N	203	203

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

³ Item 8 – Everyone believes that he or she can have a positive impact.

Table 13 Showing 'tenure' correlated against Item 8 from the questionnaire data

Correlations

			Everyone believes that he or she can have a positive impact.	Tenure
Kendall's tau_b	Everyone believes that he or she can have a positive impact.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.219**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	203	203
Tenure	Tenure	Correlation Coefficient	.219**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	203	203
Spearman's rho	Everyone believes that he or she can have a positive impact.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.256**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	203	203
Tenure	Tenure	Correlation Coefficient	.256**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	203	203

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The data show age is significant at $p < 0.05$ and having a weaker association (0.126 and 0.142). On the other hand tenure is significant at the more reliable $p < 0.01$, and indeed in this example is significant at $p < 0.001$ and also the reported effect size is stronger at 0.219 and 0.256 respectively for the two tests. The effect size here is weak to moderate. However this evidence does suggest that tenure is influencing subject response. Further investigation showed a clear pattern of staff responses as length of service increased, as shown in the tables below.

Table 14 showing summary of perceptions of teamwork

Length of service (years)	Agreement with statements (%)	Disagreement with statements (%)
Less than 1	53.8	46.2
1 – 5	40.7	59.3
6 – 10	34.2	65.8
11 – 15	20.6	79.3
Greater than 15	29.4	80.5

The table reflects respondent’s views of the college’s use of, and commitment to teamwork. To amplify the impact of ‘tenure’ on attitudes to teamwork a more detailed examination of the data is offered below. These data can be triangulated with the qualitative data where interviewees were asked to state their years of service and were questioned about teamwork, see below. The Kendall’s tau b and Spearman’s rho correlations of sum of team values and tenure were significant at 0.002 and 0.001 respectively. These data can therefore be considered as a relatively reliable generalisation to the wider population. The effect sizes at 0.17 and 0.225 can again be considered as relatively weak.

From the total of 60 questionnaire items 49 significant impacts of tenure were noted. In all of these cases length of service was associated with a more negative view of aspects of organizational life. The table below summarises the Kendall’s tau and Spearman’s rho correlation results for the top 10 items ranked by effect size. It should be emphasised that only those result significant at $p < 0.01$ have been included in this summary. It can be

seen from these data that of the two tests Spearman’s rho consistently records a higher effect size (this is a well known feature of this test).

Table 15 Summarizing the correlations of ‘tenure’ against the top 10 items by effect size.

Item	Kendall’s tau b	Spearman’s rho
Sum of capability development	0.262	0.335
The capabilities of people are viewed as an important source of competitive advantage	0.253	0.296
There is a good alignment of goals across all levels	0.246	0.283
Authority is delegated so people can act on their own	0.243	0.286
There is a clear and consistent set of values that governs the way we do business	0.230	0.271
It’s easy to co-ordinate projects across different parts of the college	0.229	0.249
Sum of strategic direction	0.227	0.279
There is a clear strategy for the future	0.220	0.253
Everyone believes that he or she can have a positive impact	0.219	0.256
Sum of co-ordination	0.217	0.279

Almost equal in terms of significant effect size at $p < 0.01$ was an item related to age of respondents. The item ‘Problems arise because we do not have the necessary skills to do the job’, recorded strength size values of 0.266, 0.313 for Kendall’s tau b and Spearman’s rho respectively. This shows that older staff are more likely to agree with this statement.

'Job title' data was recoded into 'JOBclass' where only two classes of work were permitted, teachers and non-teachers. Heads of teaching departments were included in the category teachers.. Although Templeton College did have a policy of requiring academic heads of department to teach up to 12 hours this policy is not enforced in all cases. The average teaching hours of these staff are not known but those interviewed taught three and five hours respectively. Because the number of heads of department (5 or 2.5% of sample) was small their classification made relatively little difference to the validity of the output of tests. Using standardized canonical discriminant coefficients the following results were obtained. The overall pattern of results suggests there is not a significant difference in the perceptions of these groups. There were however different perceptions of college vision and capability development where coefficients of 0.728 and 0.759 were generated respectively. The test has reasonable validity with 61.9% of cross validated group cases correctly classified and 68% of original group cases classified. Less significant difference was found in core values, team values and strategic direction. Non-teachers were less likely to agree with items related to college vision. The difference however is quite small and may largely be accounted for by the lack of 'strong agreement' to items related to the college vision amongst non-teachers. This difference also has to be considered in the context of the overall negativity for all respondents in relation to college vision. For example, the statement that 'our vision creates excitement and motivation for our employees' 50.5% of all staff disagreed and 15% strongly agreed. The teacher group showed overall disagreement of 66.4% whilst non-teachers generated a disagreement rate of 74%. Thus there was a stronger level of disagreement from the latter group but also impacting on the overall statistic was the frequency of strong

agreement for this item. Teachers recorded a smaller percentage of ‘strong agreement’ (2.5%) whereas no non-teachers were in strong agreement with this item. This has the overall effect of emphasizing the difference between the two groups. Similar results were found for capacity development where slightly greater differences between teachers and non-teachers were found; as reflected in the co-efficient reported above.

Taking for example the statement, ‘The capabilities of people are viewed as an important source of competitive advantage’ the majority of teachers, 64.8% agreed with this statement. Whereas for non-teachers a majority of 52% disagreed, of which 8% strongly disagreed. This may reflect the relative range of staff development opportunities available to the two groups of staff. In a college, and a further education system, where public scrutiny of teaching standards and performance are monitored there is perhaps a greater propensity to focus developmental activities on teachers. This is evidenced in Templeton College by a scheme of continuous professional development (CPD) that did not extend to non-teachers. Furthermore the CPD process offered teachers financial incentives ranging from £1000 to £400 for participation in the scheme. The cross tabulation results below show the typical pattern of differences between teacher and non-teacher perceptions of issues related to capacity development.

Table 16 showing Teachers v non-teachers * There is continuous investment in the skills of employees. Cross-tabulation

			There is continuous investment in the skills of employees					Total
			Missing	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Teachers v non-teachers	Teachers	Count	2	7	56	48	12	125
		% within Teachers v non-teachers	1.6%	5.6%	44.8%	38.4%	9.6%	100.0%
	Non-teachers	Count	0	3	26	35	11	75
		% within Teachers v non-teachers	.0%	4.0%	34.7%	46.7%	14.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	2	10	82	83	23	200
		% within Teachers v non-teachers	1.0%	5.0%	41.0%	41.5%	11.5%	100.0%

Table 16 shows that non-teachers are less likely to agree and more likely to disagree with items related to capacity development than teachers. However the margins of difference are quite small. The evidence available to the current data set cannot claim substantial differences between teachers and non-teachers at Templeton College. But this is not to suggest that such differences are unimportant in developing attitudes, actions and patterns of behaviours.

Analysis of the data found a number of variations of perceptions based on gender. Nearly all of these were significant at $p < 0.5$ which, as described above, poses some risk in a study of this kind. The general approach taken is a cautious one seeking not to make Type 1 errors. The sort of impact gender suggested is illustrated in the following example, where significance was $p < 0.01$. In the section on the 'vision' of the college females tended to have slightly less negative view, this was typical of those items where gender flagged as significant. Thus the item 'short-term thinking often comprises long-term vision' produced overall agreement of 71.8%; male agreement was 81.2% and female agreement 74.7%. But disagreement for females was higher at 25.3% compared to 18.8% for males. It can be claimed that there is a slight propensity for females to be

less negative in those items where gender was identified as significant. To further the analysis of gender differences the standardized canonical discriminant function coefficient test was used. The greatest difference in gendered perspectives was identified in items related to empowerment and creating change. The least gendered perspectives were found in items related to the strategic direction of the college where there was virtually no difference between female and male view (coefficient value 0.028). Overall gender cannot be cited as influence on the perspectives held by staff at the college.

Running 'frequencies' in SPSS v12 produced a summary for all 60 items in the questionnaire. Of these 24 were positive. These data imply no overall change in staff perceptions since the QPD survey that took place approximately 12 months prior to the current survey. The top and bottom five items are reproduced in the tables below.

Table 17 showing top five 'positive' items from the questionnaire data**

Item	Strong Agreement	Agreement	Disagreement	Strong Disagreement
Most employees are highly involved in their work.	15.9%	69.7%	13.9%	0.5%
There is an ethical code that guides our behaviour and tells us right from wrong.	14.3%	70.0%	10.8%	2.5%
Teams are our primary building blocks.	19.2%	59.6%	16.7%	3.0%
Learning is an important objective in our day-to-day work.	17.2%	60.6%	14.3%	2.5%
Ignoring core values will get you in trouble.	12.8%	57.6%	20.7%	3.4%

Table 18 showing the top five ‘negative’ items from the questionnaire data**

Item	Strong Agreement	Agreement	Disagreement	Strong Disagreement
Innovation and risk taking are encouraged and rewarded.	1.5%	16.7%	65.5%	9.4%
It is easy to coordinate projects across different parts of the college.	0%	19.7%	62.6%	13.3%
Our strategy leads other organizations to change the way they compete in the industry.	2.5%	20.2%	55.7%	10.3%
<i>Lots of things ‘fall between the cracks’.</i>	17.7%	56.7%	16.3%	0.5%
<i>Short-term thinking often compromises our long-term vision.</i>	13.3%	58.6%	22.2%	0.5%

**Data do not sum to 100% because of missing items.

Item 22 of the survey asked if respondents agreed that the college had a ‘strong culture’. 9.9% of respondents failed to answer this question suggesting some evidence of limited construct validity, as discussed in the previous chapter. However the question most ignored by respondents was item 30, ‘there is a good alignment of goals across all levels’. Here the missing value climbed to 11.3%, or approximately 23 people. Many staff were nervous about responding to questions where they felt they had no knowledge or information. Although encouraged to refer to their perception of the issue this type of item, such as number 30, was refused by some respondents. These cases make overt the issue of construct validity.

After running ‘frequencies’ it was possible to rank responses in order of positivity and it was from this data that the two tables above were produced. By ranking issues in this way it became possible to make crude estimates of strength of feeling. Thus learning and values were ranked highly by staff. Digging more deeply into what those values are however is a more complex matter, but certainly caring for students, in a specific learning

context as well as their wider well being, was alluded to by many interviewees, teachers and non-teachers. However the spread and agreement around the core values is less clear. Consistency and sharing of values was ranked 25th and less than 50% (48.28%) of participants agreed that similar values were shared across the range of staff. The college does have a dimension to its culture that elevates concern for its 'customers' but there is no evidence of the precise nature or extent of common adoption of these values. In fact item 23 'it is easy to reach consensus even on difficult issues' was ranked 51st and enjoyed support from only 33.99% of respondents. At quite an early stage in the analysis it became clear that the college does not experience an integrated culture (Martin, 2002). This assertion can be made with high degree of certainty. Appendix 4 shows a summary of the ranked questionnaire results and it can be seen that organizational, or college wide issues lack coherence and consistency. Shared perspectives was ranked 44th by participants with a substantial majority of staff (62.56%) failing to recognise an organizational identity. Evidence for what does *not* exist in the college comes into sharp focus from the data analysis but a more difficult proposition lies in the determination of whether, and indeed what, cultural attributes are identifiable.

Despite the proposed move into a purpose built college there is little excitement or enthusiasm in respect to the college's future. Vision and strategy are very lowly ranked garnishing very little support from college staff. Just above the bottom five was item 59, 'Our vision creates excitement and motivation for our employees' enjoying support from 28.57% of the staff with 14.57% strongly disagreeing. Issues emerging from the quantitative analysis were picked up in the qualitative data gathering.

To summarise, the quantitative data reveal a picture of a rather lack lustre workforce. There is a high degree of concern for students but little appetite or excitement in future prospects. Gender, age and tenure contribute some difference to attitudes but these tend to be rather small. Staff are guided by an ethical code that they regard as important and teamwork is seen as important. Cross college communications and communications in general are seen as a problem in the college and innovation and risk-taking are believed to be discouraged and unrewarded. The latter will be a particularly uncomfortable view for the managerialist stance especially when combined with poor view of strategic planning.

Innovation, strategic planning and competitiveness sit neatly with the managerialist perspective but enjoy relatively low levels of support from the staff.

The qualitative data analysis

This section seeks to find evidence to support or deny evidence from the quantitative data. A relatively small data set limits the validity of the data however, as shown below, the data offer rich insights into organizational life as seen by a fairly representative cross-section of staff. Consistent with principle five of this research, transparency of interpretation, quotations are used to share with the reader the source data and some possible inferences.

On the issue of the impact of tenure respondent R commented,

‘You know if you’ve worked somewhere for 20 years you’re gonna [sic] find it difficult potentially to look forward. Um I think also, again going back to the emotional thing as, unfortunately, as a result of the merger, and this doesn’t necessarily need to happen in every merger, but it needed to happen in this one, because you are losing staff. And we’ve lost you know something over 200 colleagues over the last three years inevitably people are going to see their friends their old time colleagues going, and it’s not going to feel the same and their going to say well that’s all to do with the merger’ (Transcript 1).

This may explain, to some extent, the fairly consistent negativity associated with length of service at the college. Redundancies, even voluntary ones, are unlikely to leave the remaining workforce untouched by the departure of colleagues. It may also serve to reduce job security. There may be evidence therefore that the current feelings of staff are related to the immediate past. History is a potent influence on cultural perspectives. But job insecurity was not the only factor impacting on staff attitudes in the recent history of Templeton College according to interviewee B,

‘I think people’s values have had a bit of knock lately, you know not getting the resources or the support. People feel quite negative but maybe it’ll come back in September, I don’t know’ (Transcript 2).

This comment underpins the important issue of how external factors impose themselves in the minds of college employees. The funding of colleges and issues of government policy figured in other interviewees’ comments, for example interviewee K;

‘I think all of us, including [NAME OF PRINCIPAL] are sick of government initiatives, government interventions, changes of ministers. They change the minister responsible for further education all the time. We had the Kennedy report, the Kennedy report, promised the earth didn’t it? 1998, 99’ (Transcript 5).

This comment expresses a longer term uncertainty facing English further education colleges. It seems unlikely that long serving members of staff would be untouched by the

interpretation of macro level policy changes as they have been filtered and interpreted by college managers and governors. Frequent policy changes, funding regimes and a poor focus for colleges has left staff uncertain and insecure. The interpretations of staff to the changes in funding and policy have cultivated a deficit model of the sector. Although almost every indicator of performance suggests that colleges are doing better and improving the staff have seen little material benefit from the changes and challenges that have impacted their conditions of employment. As shown in Table 6, above, many of the grievances of staff can be related to inadequate funding.

In both the quantitative and qualitative data sets questions were asked about teamwork. This variable is therefore one of the most pivotal concepts in the research. The attempt here was to discover what emphasis and value staff at Templeton College placed on collaboration with colleagues.

66.5% of respondents felt teamwork rather than hierarchy was used to 'get work done' suggesting that college organization was based on team-working principles.

78.8% of respondents agreed that teams were the 'primary building blocks' of the college. However, less certain responses reflect operational realities in the college; 52.2% of respondents agreeing that 'co-operation across different parts of the organization is actively encouraged' and 57.1% felt 'people work like they are part of a team'. One of the newest members of staff had an interesting perspective. Despite only being at the college for '14/15 months' interviewee P said,

‘Within this department - definitely part of a team. On a larger scale within the college no, I’d say very much it [the team] was isolated in this role when it comes to interacting with other departments’ (Transcript 13).

It was also very hard to find any positive evidence that teamwork was actively encouraged. Interviewee M captures the essence of many other interviewees when asked about teamwork at the college.

‘Um I think it varies a bit, we do have team meetings they were scheduled at the beginning of the year on Tuesday. Now Tuesday is my day off normally, I was a little bit put out. The official time for meetings is Wednesday afternoon.

Yes that’s right?

And Friday mornings and I’m in work at those times and so I was a little bit put out because it means I can’t go to the meetings. But I did say that to [NAME OF LINE MANAGER] and he said ‘don’t worry about it [NAME]’. But the thing is you like to go to the meeting if you can.

At [ANOTHER SITE/FORMER COLLEGE] I work in two teams I must admit meetings are quite rare. One particular course I’ve never been to a meeting and sometimes again it’s a meeting on Friday morning and I’m here [DIFFERENT SITE].

Do you think the college encourages teamwork?

Not particularly, I don’t think so, not particularly. I mean the pressure is on to have meetings but, you know, that is just to satisfy uh, so they can tick a box and say meetings have taken place; not in the real sense of the word team; that people work together and go forward together’ (Transcript 14).

The use of the term ‘they’, ‘so *they* can a tick box’, also suggests a schism between some staff and managers. This is a common expression in many of the staffrooms and although it may be a shortened form of ‘the management’ there is at times a general inference of alienation from the decision-making process (research log).

The college does present evidence of differences between policy intention and actual behaviours in the college. The evidence from team meetings shows that the college policy is for regular team meetings the actual occurrence is lower. Similarly the involvement in staff development for teachers at the college was compulsory. But for

those staff who did not participate there were no sanctions. This does suggest a strong element of 'game playing' ((Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). The staff gave a feeling that although there were requirements such as team meetings, uniform lesson plans, and staff development, these were not central to the work of the college (teaching). A sense of token compliance emerged. This was especially evident in the completion of staff 'logs' in the college's staff development programme. To access the financial payoff staff had to self-complete a record of their developmental activities. For many staff completion of the log *was* the main staff development activity. Management were not unaware of this but the game was the completion statistic, not the quality of actual staff development. This behaviour is consistent with the requirements of audit. The headline figures become a substitute for real activity and most staff are compliant, especially when there is reward.

But this is not to say that, for example, real staff development is not taking place. Many staff enthusiastically and voluntarily undertake staff development but now the activity has become the *target* meeting the requirement becomes more important than the quality of the action. This is the main purpose of the *game* meeting the target, but as Davies has noted in FE there is a real danger of 'hitting the target but missing the point' (Davies, 2003).

However one of the most senior staff interviewed had a different perspective to other staff on the issue of teamwork. R (7 years service), a leader of a senior team, states

clearly, 'If you ain't got team - well you've literally had it.' and he also felt part of collaborative team, he continued,

'If I take my immediate team which is the [NAME OF TEAM] it is an extremely strong team. And you know I am obviously extremely dependent on them in terms of their collective advice and also for the implementation of things and so on, but that is a very strong team indeed. But again that takes time to develop, you know we weren't that strong two years ago and weren't that strong four years ago or whatever' (Transcript 1).

R's colleague E (18 months service) has a slightly different view and does not talk about the strength of the same team,

'It's always going to be difficult as nine people working together as a team So in terms of the nine people we meet on a weekly basis and that's probably the only time as a team we work closely together' (Transcript 3).

E gives an example of where the team clearly is not working together,

'I could be putting pressure on [NAME OF GROUP OF MANAGERS], to get things back for me by Friday the whatever and that's the same day they've got to get the [NAME OF A REPORT] back to [NAME OF ANOTHER SENIOR MANAGER]. The reality is [NAME OF SENIOR MANAGER] and I don't even know we've given them a conflicting deadline' (Transcript 3).

It became clear during the data collection that there have been tensions in the relationship between heads of teaching departments and the senior management team of the college.

This was talked about by some of the senior managers, all heads of departments and other staff were aware that teamwork at the most senior level of the college was experiencing frictions. The college used the services of an outside consultant to report, inter alia, on how relationships between senior managers could be improved. A flavour of staff views of teamwork is given by the following quotes;

'Sometimes I feel there's a kind of team feeling amongst [COLLEAGUES IN A SIMILAR ROLE] but not all the time. There was like camps – the Central staff, the

Woodside Hill staff I've got the feeling there was still some of that I mean to a certain extent I think there might still be a little bit' (Transcript 10).

'We did have four in the team a year ago now we got me and [NAME]' (Transcript 11).

'I don't think there's a culture, within my perspective, that teamwork is strongly encouraged in the college. I think here people don't work in teams, it's course organisers, it's not a team really. The [END OF YEAR REVIEW] is a paper exercise really because teamwork is not embedded throughout the whole year' (Transcript 6).

Similarly another respondent,

'Since merger teamwork has been more difficult.

Do you have a view why that is?

Well you know talking about culture I do, the merger obviously brought two teams together that had been working in a completely different organizational culture[s] and the one and other just didn't merge very well. I don't think the change and the merger was very well managed and I think if it wouldn't have been for the individuals um sort of doing bits and pieces towards it wouldn't have happened at all. But I think there's a lack of communications, a lack of explanation of why certain things are done in certain way' (Transcript 8).

When B was asked if the college encouraged teamwork,

'Oh God, not really, I think because the principal for example doesn't really understand what our work entails, he has no idea really. What he wants out of the team is probably something that we couldn't deliver with the time available. You know we haven't got the time to communicate a great deal have we?' (op.cit.)

From the interview data it was very difficult to find evidence that supported the belief in teams as 'our primary building blocks', a view expressed in the questionnaire data.

Templeton College does begin to take shape as a fractured entity, an official face to the world and a more complex and pragmatic reality. There is evidence from teachers that 'reference groups' (Miller, 1996) emerge rather than effective teams. Miller (1996)

borrowed from Nias (1985) the idea of reference groups that teachers form for affiliative support groups that tend to be very small, perhaps only consisting of one or two people.

As M says,

‘I’m in a team with [NAME 1] and [NAME 2] and [NAME 3] and I find with me and [NAME 1] although we only see each other once a week I get on really well with [NAME 1] and I feel that is quite a good team’[REFERENCE HERE IS TO M’S RELATIONSHIP WITH NAME1] (Transcript15).

Along with many other colleges in the English further education sector Templeton College has developed a mission statement, a short statement that summarises the purpose of the college. The item 48 in the questionnaire ‘There is a clear mission that gives meaning and direction to our work’ was agreed with by 51.7% of staff. It might be expected that a clear mission would be associated with a clear understanding of what the college is ‘producing’. Interviewees were asked what they thought the college output was, the following responses have been tabulated below. Responses are identified by job title and tenure of the staff is also indicated.

Table 19 Listing responses of staff to a question on the output of the college

Job Title	Tenure (years)	The output of the college is.....
Senior Manager	1.5	‘[LONG HESITATION] er that’s a tricky one, that’s a tricky one. We’re certainly not manufacturing widgets, we’re as far away from that as you could be I think. [HESITATION] and I, I would like to think that the output is a, is an individual who leaves the college better prepared for work or for life or for whatever than when they came to us. That’s what I’d like to think our output is. I think in essence though our output is probably more measurably than that in terms of quality indicators and the way in which the LSC measures the targets they set for us. So our outputs are the number of qualifications that the students walk away with um the success rates that we deliver. The retention and achievement rate, I guess the LSC would see those as our outputs.

		But I don't know I think as an organization our outputs are learning and education and training; and advising and guiding those I would see as output. Inputs are teachers, support staff outputs then are what they do. To me an output is the delivery of 2m guided learning hours.'
Head of Teaching Department	16	'Oh gosh, what do we do, I don't really know. We produce people with qualifications. I think we give people bits of paper that matter. I think staff would say it's all very well but we'd like to make an impact on people's lives, that's what I like to think staff would say, and I think they really do think that.'
Teacher	4	'um I think it's obviously producing people with more qualifications, so it's getting people through, getting them on to the next level of qualification. But, I mean, also the course I'm dealing with has got placements with them so hopefully we're giving them vocational experience so they can go into the workplace and you know I suppose we're producing people who may be quite employable, hopefully.'
Teacher	21	'Um educated people I suppose. But it's not like when you're making something is it really? There's nothing to show for it at the end, what you have at the end is people, maybe with better education. I don't think you can turn it into that sort of business really.'
Teacher	7	'What are we producing? In what sense? <i>If you think of us a business, what is our product?</i> 'Erm [HESITATION] Oh that's an in-depth question, let me think. It's probably [LONG HESITATION] erm I would say its probably a student who [HESITATION] is well informed, well educated and I would hope left the college with a lot better outlook probably than they came in with. Erm and more

		confidence and self-esteem themselves really; that they can do something and they can achieve'
Teacher	19	'Right, I've said we're business-like but I always wrestle with that; are we a business or are we a service that is business-like and I haven't come to a conclusion on that. Um I don't if we've got a production line or like a shop or something like that. I don't see it in those terms. I see, yes we are a business-like providing an education [HESITATION] whether you'd say it was a service or facility whatever. The product of that is people. People who have hopefully benefited from their experience here. It's equipped them in some way to advance themselves in some way; broaden them intellectually, increase their potential earning ability; whatever motivated them to come here in the first place.'
Teacher	27	<p>'[LONG HESITATION] I don't think I've ever thought of it. I mean yes, you've got exam results. I don't accept credit if the results are particular good and again I won't accept blame if the results are particularly poor.</p> <p><i>So qualifications are our output?</i></p> <p>'They are an output, they are the sort of measurable output aren't they?</p> <p><i>Yes, yeah.</i></p> <p>'There is the achievement and retention figures that are banded about all the time and drives us potty. But no, for me personally it's the individuals you've worked with that have made a lot of progress clearly got a lot from your course; hopefully gone on successfully at the end of that.'</p>
Support worker	1.25	'Within [THE COLLEGE] is to obviously provide the best education to the students we have. Which at the moment I think

		they are doing but I don't tend to agree with the way they're looking at it to make it a bit more business-like. Sometimes there appears to be too much red tape and too much of a relaxed atmosphere. I think if it was ran a bit more business-like it would increase the potential and the output you actually get from it'
Support worker	5	'Well it seems to be qualifications, which is a bit of shame.' <i>Can you say a little bit more about that?</i> 'We don't' seem to do courses just for the sake of learning anymore. They have to jump through the hoop to get a qualification'
Support worker	6	'[HESITATION] courses to enable people to be able to move on. You know, it varies, could be producing people that are able to go out to work or other things to do.'
Principal	7	'On the one hand technical competence and er I think on another hand related to that confidence and I think we [hesitation] quite a socialising force as well, those are the 3 I'd pick. I mean under technical competence you can talk about economic prosperity and all of that but it's the technical side of things but I think there's a confidence that I mentioned is extremely important but probably rarely gets said, I don't know.'

There does appear to be a bifurcated objective in the minds of many of the college staff. The recent moves to quantify educational outcomes are evident in many responses and there is also strong reference to wider educational goals. The extent that these two ambitions contradict, or the perception that they do so, may well be an important aspect that undermines college-wide attempts to develop a set of strongly shared values. The

pressure to produce auditable outcomes is perhaps sitting uneasily with the wider humanitarian ambitions cited by participants. But there is no reason why this has to be the case. The duality of achievement and personal development are not intrinsically in opposition. The recent history of the colleges of further education has seen however much greater levels of debate about performance and value-added measures. There is evidence that for many college staff this debate has drawn attention away from the wider purpose of learning evidenced in many of the respondents' comments. The macro-level debate about performance and quality has not been supported by the sufficient maintenance of the traditional values of education; values that attracted many staff into the teaching profession. Consequently the development of *shared values* is contested and fragmented at least at the surface level of staff perceptions. Shared values and converging objectives are key elements in cultural identity. Although the schism between achievement and personal development may be at a surface level this division may be a serious impediment to the construction of an institutional identity.

Templeton College's cultural identity

There is evidence that the college does have core values. Concern for the students is strongly in evidence in all sections of the staff. Although this may be expressed in different ways even the top items of staff grievances can be connected to their views of how their teaching function could be improved. The evidence suggests that concern for students often sits uneasily with the bureaucratic requirements of college audit.

Managers' requirements to demonstrate compliance with objectives set by the funding

agency are often regarded as distractions from the main business of the college, teaching and learning.

The compliance, that is essential for funding, takes the form of ‘game playing’.

Inevitably such behaviours breed a degree of scepticism and cynicism. There is a danger that many staff will regard *all* new practices as paper exercises and the scope for real quality improvement in the college is at risk.

Effective teamwork in the college is more strongly based on natural affinities rather than on the enforced relationships consistent with membership of a particular teaching group. Teachers especially seem to have more problems developing effective teams, and this is probably due to differences in fundamental attitudes to teaching and learning. Whilst concern for students is a core value it does not enjoy uniform interpretation. Where staff work with colleagues from different schools or sections relationships seem even more problematic. The attitude towards the college as a business has been digested as a *modus operandi* and is beginning to impact on teacher. But deeper values appear to be key drivers of behaviour and the negative feelings of staff reflect the uneasiness of many with the values that can be associated with audit and measurement of outcomes. Managers are building bridges between these, often opposing, forces and often bear the brunt of staff criticism.

The existence of shared values is an important cultural attribute. However whilst shared values are an important dimension of culture the mere existence of this value does not

provide evidence of an organizational culture per se. This and other issues are more fully discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusions

A substantial amount of data have been collected and it is concluded that it forms a safe basis for drawing inferences to the wider population of the college. Perhaps disappointingly no major revelations were identified and the data suggest the college has a fragmented rather integrated identity. There is some evidence of tokenism toward many aspects of performance management and audit. There is a picture emerging of a strong student-centred ethos in the college but recognisable cultural attributes have not been detected.

Many of the findings from the quantitative data are explained by comments from college staff. A difficult dimension has been to identify change. With little data about pre-incorporation college culture it has been difficult to determine what is new and what has always existed. An impression is that many changes have not impacted substantially on teacher practice. Record keeping and audit requirements have been adopted with varying degrees of enthusiasm and diligence. But there is a stronger impression of a passive compliance, an acceptance that is expressed by some employees as 'jumping through hoops' or 'ticking boxes' (Staff transcripts).

The following chapter examines in more detail the college's identity that can be extracted from the data. The findings are considered in the context of theoretical understandings and deeper meanings are explored.

Chapter 5 Further analysis and conclusions

Introduction

This chapter assesses the meanings of the data and explores ways that the findings can be interpreted and understood. A brief review of some significant findings is followed by further analysis that includes the issue of external validity. Consistent with my original expectations the data demonstrate the difficulties of definition and construct validity of the concept organizational culture. The study has clearly demonstrated that the construction of the college as an integrated culture is without foundation. However a more cautious interpretation is needed to determine whether this finding can be extended to the wider population of the FE sector. Moreover the data have occasioned me to revisit my own understanding of the concept 'organizational culture'. In this chapter I offer an alternative view of culture as a network of relational identities. This view draws on the work of Bourdieu and takes a sociological perspective of the issue of organizational culture. The chapter offers some conclusions and suggests directions for further research. The final section summarises the contribution to knowledge that the research can claim.

Summary of data findings

The tenure of staff and length of service were the only significant pattern of responses that emerged. Length of service was nearly always associated with a more negative view of the college. Generally this association was weak and although detectable in statistical

terms it does not allow a confident prediction that this correlation has operational significance. Gender was deemed not to be an influence on perceptions of staff at Templeton College although, once again, some weak statistical variations were found.

Within Templeton College there is a significant collision of interpretations especially between senior managers and other members of the college community. This attribute was corroborated by data from the QPD survey and some of the interview transcripts. The cause of these tensions was not clear, although tentative explanations are offered below. It is worth emphasizing that external causes seem just as likely to be responsible for staff negativity as internal factors. The data revealed the most important values to staff as commitment to work, recognition of an ethical code, teamwork, learning and core values. These provide an interesting contrast to the more business-oriented issues, that as reported earlier tend to gravitate to being the least important issues for staff.

Commitment to work however is not the same as commitment to organization. As Silver (2003) found university teachers had loyalty to their discipline as 'the determining factor in most academics conception of their identities' (Silver, p.157). In Templeton College teacher commitment was more likely to be constructed in terms of allegiance to students. This is consistent with the finding of Goodrham (2003) who asserts that despite significant change in the sector, 'Teaching students probably still constitutes the major part of professional responsibility for most FE practitioners' (p.2).

Despite the introduction of new management strategies, that has been described in this study as 'managerialism' there is some evidence that deeper values and practices have

been relatively untouched by these changes. The academic staff, as teachers are often described in the college, have developed coping and compliance strategies to avoid the full impact of the management gaze (cf. Shain and Gleeson, 1999). These strategies are bolstered by a middle management that often appears to be under-confident in its ability to enforce changes. Policies are introduced but non-compliance is often ignored and there is evidence of ‘game’ playing in terms of completion of paperwork. Examples include the introduction of a ‘lateness policy’, itself a response to the senior management’s anxieties around the impending visit of OFSTED inspectors. Some teachers were quite open about their non-compliance going to the extent of removing the notices from the classroom doors. For other teachers the policy was evidence of the detachment of the ‘management’ from the realities of college life. One teacher describes a student who has a phobia about class attendance.

‘Every morning she goes to the toilets and vomits before coming to class. How can I send her away for being late?’ (research log)

No sanctions were taken against teachers for various acts of non-compliance or resistance to the application of the policy. This example suggests that amongst some teachers there was no sympathy with the aims of the management of the college. As such this is evidence of division rather than unity. Similarly it appeared that the college’s continuous professional development (CPD) scheme was often reduced to a form-filling exercise. Some heads of school were keen to show high levels of participation but paid much less regard to the quality of developmental activities. Although non-participation in the scheme was discussed by senior managers as a disciplinary matter no action was taken against a significant minority who ignored the incentives and the cajolements to

participate. It appeared that there were many middle managers who lacked real commitment to some of the changes and this may have been one of the sources of tension between middle and senior managers that was reported earlier. The target for managers was to show high levels of participation and success was measured in terms of quantity rather than quality. This appears to be an example where the audit requirement, proof of high levels of participation in CPD, may actually reduce effectiveness rather than enhance it.

Some of the middle managers were themselves frustrated about the perceived inability of senior managers to enforce a stricter discipline on other managers. According to one head of school,

‘...because if you respected the Principal you would turn up on time, you would, if they ask for deadlines, he [the Principal] doesn’t manage the fact that people don’t meet deadlines. What are you going to do about that? Well, that’s why I moan, why should I do that, why should I do X, why should I do my [NAME OF TASK] by the middle of [NAME OF MONTH] when other people, you know only a third of heads of school will do so. What happens to those who don’t? He’s [the Principal] excellent in terms of people skills, he’s very supportive, a super Principal for me in terms of [NAME OF DUTY] I could ask him anything, he’d always try, he’s open to listening to ideas. He needs an enforcer, that’s my view’ (Transcript 9).

This manager’s view was supported by another manager who also burst the myth of teamwork.

‘They’re just individuals [the senior management]. If there was any teamwork everybody would know what’s going on, you know they seem to send out lots of ‘must be done by’ things, then they realise somebody else has got the same target date, [PAUSE] and all sorts of things. They all seem to work in camps I think rather than teamwork, they give me the feeling they don’t really know what every one else is doing.’ (Transcript 10).

Middle managers are classically 'stuck in the middle'. On one hand they are required to meet the demands of the audit bureaucracy and on the other they have to meet the educational expectations of teachers. Often former teachers, middle managers may have divided loyalties. Although one manager was quite clear, 'I see myself as a manager' (research log) for others there is more ambiguity. Also promoted middle managers were teachers in the recent past and many of them had collected many years of service. It is possible that these managers are affected by the scepticism that is associated with tenure.

These examples illustrate an ambivalence that may tend to fragment any development of shared values. Values promoted by the college may be considered with some scepticism because of incidence of weak enforcement, as mentioned by the manager quoted above. Although tainted by the risk of construct validity staff were asked about the 'output' of the college.

Staff were asked about the output of the college to ascertain if there was a high degree of shared purpose. This question was also designed to test the idea of the college as a 'business'. The question about the output of the college, was problematic for many respondents, although there was a consistent theme of responses that focused on student outcomes. Superficially it could be claimed that this was an integrating value. However, closer questioning revealed that participants held very different views of student interests. The 'official' view that successful outcomes can be measured by qualifications was not universally recognised as the most important outcome. Surprisingly perhaps many non-teachers shared this view. An emerging theme was the bifurcation between learning and

the achievement of qualifications, this was a force that may cause division rather unity. Teacher talk was tainted by an undercurrent of dismay that suggested managers paid less attention to learning than to achievements. As alluded to above this is symptomatic of the different levels of understanding regarding the requirements on colleges. In many cases the college management are the targets of staff frustration. This was particularly evident where budgetary constraints limited educational provision to groups deemed to be needy. Staff were thus inclined to be sceptical of management change and often talked of managers failing to understand.

A tentative explanation of managers failing to enforce policy compliance may be the sheer pressure of change. As discussed in chapter 2 there has been no stasis in policy change affecting further education. One example of this is the use of manager's time. Costs constraints encouraged the college to ask academic managers to teach as well as organise their respective departments. Outwardly this may look like a strength for managers who were trying to bridge the educational goals of the college with the business goals. The reality may have been a weakness as this practice may emphasise the ambivalent role of departmental (school) heads.

Budgetary restrictions can be illustrated again with the example of a teacher who wanted to participate in a local university teacher training initiative that required some remission from teaching. His head of school supported his involvement but said there was 'no way' any remission could be given. The teacher was told he was a 'good' practitioner and the quality of the delivery would be damaged if another teacher were to cover his classes.

(research log). The teacher claimed it was not the quality of provision that was driving the manager's response but the cost. These examples serve to illustrate a friction that appears to exist in terms of the priorities of teachers and managers and serve to undermine a sense of shared purpose.

It is possible that the macro philosophy of 'more for less' contributed to these micro collisions of interest and priority. In the case of the above the teacher resolved the issue by giving more of his own time to an activity that he deemed worthwhile. What is not clear is how in the future the same individual may require some informal payback for his commitment to the college. This incident also illustrates how individual actions and decisions may be more important than espoused values. The teaching staff would discuss such incidents and were likely to believe that this was evidence of local management priorities (research log). The micro decision making of managers is likely to be influenced by a range of pressures but teaching colleagues claimed there was little transparency. It may be that at this level perceptions of shared values and culture are formed. If this is the case there is a strong argument for seeing culture as very localised and unique; a kaleidoscope of values and beliefs.

Non-teaching staff also talked of their frustrations, in some cases closely paralleling teacher comment, respondent H for example, a support worker;

'We don't' seem to do courses just for the sake of learning anymore. They have to jump through the hoop to get a qualification' (Transcript H). The same frustrations felt with managers and management practice was also apparent within the support staff.

Respondent H, again, represents this tension in its most extreme form, '[NAME OF LINE MANAGER] situation for instance, he's an absolutely rubbish manager' (Transcript H).

Teaching staff were also inclined to be critical of middle manager decisions. For example, G a teacher of 21 years in reference to her line manager, 'He'll say something to me and he'll say something totally different to another colleague; and different again you know' (Transcript G). The negative view of management was also corroborated in the QPD report that found the staff view of management was below the sector average.

Does the case study have external validity?

This study is attempting to determine whether the concept of organizational culture exists in colleges of further education. Consideration must be given therefore to the extent that this study can claim external validity. The key issue is the extent that Templeton College may be similar to, or different from, other colleges.

Templeton College was formed from merger and, at the time of writing, operated from three different sites. These factors are not unique for colleges of further education. Merger activity in the sector has been increasing (CEI, 2003) and multi-site operation is common within FE. The merger did not appear strongly in perceptions of staff and very few informants raised this issue. The relocations and perturbations of merger may have been assimilated into the general mind set of staff as a further symptom of the financial constraints placed on the college. All colleges were likely to experience the impacts of

managerialism at the level of meeting the requirements of the funding agency and complying with the requirements of OFSTED.

But Templeton College had been experiencing student recruitment difficulties and had inherited building unsuitable to the delivery of education in the 21st century (Principal's view, research log). Although the college would not claim these circumstances to be unique they were certainly not shared by some other colleges. The incorporation of colleges impacted differently in different areas. The activity levels in the local economy are factors that can influence the range of provision and student numbers in colleges. The location of Templeton College in an area that traditionally depended on the manufacturing industry may have been a contributory factor to the difficulties of student recruitment. Over commitment to some areas of provision also made the college susceptible to greater insecurity when funding changes took place. For example the college at one point had significant funding from the European Social Fund (ESF). The extension of the European community occasioned a switch of priorities and over a very short time cycle ESF funding almost completely disappeared as a source of college revenue. Such policy swings give college management little time to prepare contingencies. The sharp edge of such change may well impact on staff who may construct the problem in terms of local management rather than recognise the external causes of the financial turbulence.

However given the territory of this study, and the comments regarding case studies in chapter 3, it would be unwise for this study to claim robustness in terms of external

validity. The merger of two colleges to form Templeton College has created one of the largest FE colleges in England and size may be a significant factor in considerations of culture and staff relationships. It is likely that location also has significant bearing on shared beliefs. The relatively high level of competition in the compact urban area of the case study college contrasts significantly from colleges in rural locations that may enjoy much lower levels of competition. Those colleges that enjoy more secure patterns of recruitment may have a buffer against fluctuations in activity and funding.

One of the areas neglected by the study is the impact of students on college culture, as alluded to in chapter 2. It would be a mistake to think that students are not influenced by, or able to influence, cultural aspects of a college. Again issues of location are likely to be significant variables that cannot be ignored. Templeton College draws some of its students from areas of social deprivation and also had a significant number of students drawn from ethnic minorities. These factors not only influence the challenges of teaching and learning but they may also influence values and attitudes that lie at the heart of cultural understandings.

The general negativity of a significant minority of long-serving staff at the college may be related to the series of funding crises endured to a greater or lesser extent in the constituent colleges that formed Templeton. In both colleges staff with longer tenure would have experienced job insecurities, wide-spread redundancies and management reorganisations. Within the combined college staff would claim contrasting experiences but few would have been untouched by such upheavals. The widely constructed view of

a ‘golden age’ of FE in the years before incorporation is a collective view of the past tinged with selective accounts of prior experiences cf. Goodhram (2003) et al. However from a Templeton College perspective the unabated pace of change does contrast with the relative stability and greater security when the college was part of the LEA .

The development of cultural theory is traditionally located within the subject matter of anthropology. The research into the culture of Templeton College has allowed an emic perspective of potential cultural attributes. This does not mean that this perspective is more or less valid than etic understandings. The disclosure of information from informants is likely to have been affected by the relationship between the researcher and the researched. What is not known however is *how* this relationship has impacted the quality of data. There was, in some interviews, a sense of revelation, of ‘private stories’, an opportunity to retell a deeply held view of the college. In some cases, for example transcripts 5, 7, 9 and 10, respondents did ask about confidentiality. There was a sense that they felt they were revealing information that may have been unacceptable to the ‘management’. Equally some respondents may have been more guarded in their comments. This influence counter balances the ‘richness’ of the qualitative data.

My view of culture as a constellation of variables that enjoy shared meanings that was stated at the end of chapter 2, is denied by the findings from the data. Templeton College shows a very low level of shared agreement. The ‘constellation’ that forms the organizational culture of the college contains both centrifugal and centripetal forces. The centrifugal forces may be strong enough to undermine any meaningful sense of unity.

The key issue of ‘shared vision’, investigated in the quantitative data, reflects the

differences between the perceptions of managers and other workers at Templeton College. This conclusion is consistent with the analysis of Raz and Fadlon (2006) who cites previous work,

‘we stress that organizational culture is better viewed as constituted on two interconnected categories: managerial and workplace cultures [Raz, 2000]’ (op.cit. p.166).

If Templeton College has a culture it is fragmented and transient. There must be a point where the fragmentation of any entity calls into question any generalizations concerning the sum of the parts.

The staff were far from unanimous in their view of the future of the college. This was despite the prospect of moving to a new building – a move that should be completed by September 2008. This may reflect resistance to change and reluctance on the part of many staff to uproot so soon after the disturbance of merger. Table 16 shows that the strength of negative feelings is related to length of service at the college. This correlation was the most significant of all findings. The data show there is very weak evidence for shared values although the college mission statement has attempted to project cross-college values. However concern for students is detected as a core value although the concept itself suffers from construct validity. Even here, the elevation of student interest as a core value, a cautious interpretation is required. Like asking nurses if they care for patients it would be an unusual response if it were not the case.

A sociological perspective of the evidence

The data did not reveal significant patterns of meanings that were essential to my construct of organizational culture and therefore it was necessary to find a different interpretation of meaning. The following section examines a sociological interpretation of the organization as relational entity. One way of envisioning the college as an organization is to employ the concepts of field, habitus, game and cultural capital as used by Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). This influence clearly stems from my involvement in the TLCFE research project.

Before using these concepts as a framework for the analysis of Templeton College it is worth clarifying their meaning. Bourdieu uses the construct of field as a dialectic; the struggle for legitimacy and supremacy. Although unlike the Marxist dialectic 'fields' contain no intrinsic contradictions that are the seeds of their own demise. In fact Bourdieu uses the concept of field as a more stable element linked to the reproduction of power and control. Society is seen as a series of overlapping fields and thus human habitus is developed by interaction in a variety of different contexts. This theory therefore suggests that non-genetic human attributes are acquired through a process of acculturation rather than enculturation. Habitus is a 'system of acquired dispositions functioning on the practical level as categories of perception and assessment or as classificatory principles as well as being the organizing principles of action' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

This 'system' therefore dictates how social actors, and therefore organizational members perceive and understand the rules of the 'game'. The subjective acquisition of habitus is objectively demonstrated by behaviours and responses. Organizational agents act out their roles and their agency is determined by structural constraints and freedoms.

Organizational members are limited by powerful discourses and although not passive receptors of external stimuli the scope of agency is more restricted than the agents themselves recognize. These discourses operate at the conscious and unconscious levels. Discourses operate in layers of influence, the exterior layers having a more limited influence over human agency. But deeper layers are more defined and constraining.

Bourdieu's notions of capital refer to economic power but also extend to include more subtle features of stored and transferable power and authority. Cultural capital is therefore the authority on the constituents of, for example, validity and taste. These forms of capital exist in many guises and are associated with particular domains of activity. 'A capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field' (Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L., p.101).

Human agency and the structural limitations, such as the physical environment, the management/staff duality and cultural capital, constitute the rules of the 'game'. In the game of social interaction players unconsciously act out roles where roles and choices are likely to be much more constrained than most actors imagine. Thus the organizational actors are products of complex relationships that contribute to what Husserl called the 'doxa'.

The use of cultural capital is also an important concept to gain further insights into organizational relationships. Bourdieu uses cultural capital as a more permanent construct than economic capital. The acquisition of money and wealth is important but perhaps secondary to the more durable concept of cultural capital. This notion is embedded in Marxist interpretations of social theory and class struggle. It is however highly pertinent to the discussion of values, power and identity. Cultural capital is reflected in symbolic actions and behaviours. Thus in wider society the acquisition of degrees, particularly those from Russell Group institutions, constitutes symbolic capital. Qualifications and status are part of the currency of the cultural 'economy'. Within the college rank in the hierarchy, status and fewer teaching hours are some of the symbols of cultural capital. Even more subtle symbols such as hierarchy of classes also send subtle messages of status and importance. The 'best' teachers are more likely to teach the 'better' classes and as such the social order of the college is constructed. These issues construct the contextual background that form and influence human agency within the college.

The term field is used by Bourdieu as 'systems of objective relations that are constituted by various species of capital' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, p. 94). Although there is a *prima facie* assumption that the college is a field closer analysis suggests this may not be the case. The social space that constitutes the field is not constrained by the border or walls of the college buildings. In fact social space is a mechanism for developing the distinctions and classifications of social actors and therefore organizational members. It is hard to believe that the ranking and classifications of social actors is suspended within

colleges. It is more likely that the organization reinforces, or in Bourdieu's terms 'reproduces and transforms' wider social relationships. This view is consistent with other theorists who recognise that organizations have porous and fluid boundaries and are not the neatly bounded entities implied by the common use of the term, cf. Martin (2002).

In Templeton College quality of teaching can be constructed as both cultural and economic capital; economic in the sense that promotion and pay can be connected to classroom performance. But also 'cultural' because being a 'good teacher' carries kudos and gives teachers' internal and external recognition. Interestingly being a 'good teacher' may also be used in the college as a shield from undesirable change. For example teacher refusal to participate in uniform lesson planning or formal staff development is more difficult for management to challenge when a teacher has a good record of producing successful outcomes. Alternatively teachers who enjoy less favourable reputations may more easily become the targets of management gaze. In Templeton College the powerful arbiters of 'good teaching' are the managers. It is their authority which has the means to recognise and reward those aspects of behaviour that have the capability to maintain the order required by the organization. In Templeton College the introduction of standardised lesson planning (research diary) documentation was a symbol of this authority. Teachers of plumbing, hairdressing, accounts and sociology were all required to complete the same lesson planning form. To what extent that documentation is still used is a moot point. But the degree of co-operation with such initiatives is a measure of commitment to the game. Since the incorporation of colleges there has been more emphasis placed on the business objectives of the colleges and this may imply less

emphasis on ‘academic freedom’, for example. The right to challenge received wisdom legitimised opinions that were contrary to the established views. College managers now occupy the majority of seats on the college’s academic board and ranks are quickly closed when issues are raised that impact negatively on the received versions of quality and the image of the college (Transcript 9). This is a management reaction to the quasi-competitive situation of colleges. The divergence of opinions over aims, objectives and consequent strategies is a perhaps a luxury that managerialism cannot accept.

For example, one manager is talking about consultations with students, ‘we’re so hooked up on benchmarking against certain criteria we don’t ask what really matters’ (Transcript 11). This exhibits one of the dilemmas of teacher-managers. The surface focus or outer layers of influence are the external targets seen here as contrasted against deeper, inner layers of influence, views about the purpose and value of education. The same manager also reported how gender influenced manager-to-manager interactions. This informant believed gender moderated reactions from some senior managers who dealt with male colleagues in a more severe style (Transcript 11). Gendered responses are amongst the deepest layers of influence. The subtle changes in body language, tone of voice and choice of words etc. may operate at unconscious levels. Although in this study there was very little evidence of gender difference detected in the analysis of the data this may be accounted for by the difficulty of discovering deeply held values. Other informants may have been restricted by the aura of political correctness concerning gender, race and disability issues. Only in very high trust situations would informants reveal their deeply held beliefs.

The notions of economic and cultural capital are also useful levers in developing an understanding of organizations. Economic capital, a more widely recognised concept, is reflected in salary structures and Templeton College, like most organizations has a hierarchical salary structure where reward is most closely linked with management responsibilities. In theory it is possible for an advanced teacher to be more highly rewarded than a school manager but in practice in Templeton College this is not the case. The significance of economic capital within organizations provides a generally recognized constraint on human relationships and interactions. In transcript 5 the teacher talks of his struggle to accept the changes in the college. His 27 year- period of service has been interrupted by attempts to start his own business but 'it's economic reality that brings you back' (Transcript 5). The teacher also reported an interesting contradiction in terms of management authority. Asked about teamwork and meetings he replied,

'Every Wednesday is the meeting day for different groups.'

Are they well attended?

'They are compulsory'

That interesting, different departments have different systems for holding meetings.

'Well for me, personally this year, I haven't been to any. Wednesday is my day out so I've missed the whole lot and no pressure has been put on me to come in; and obviously I've never been offered payment for coming but that's my one day in the week I'm not in. But it's almost a three-line whip to attend' (Transcript 5).

The teacher was oblivious to the contradictions in this statement. The existence of management power was expressed and denied. The reference to pay is also an interesting one. The teacher's story sits uneasily with the management view that a 'meeting's rate of pay' is available. The game here is quite transparent. The teacher spoke of his unhappiness with current FE, the more 'managed' environment contrasted with his earlier experiences of college life. However, although the constraint of management offended

him – the compulsory nature of meetings, ‘a three-line whip’ he also acknowledged that his non-attendance was not an issue that had been addressed by management. The teacher also posed the economic issue of pay. The government’s over-arching view of rewards based on ‘something for something’ may be reflected back by many individuals. This teacher does not seem to have questioned the merit or otherwise of attending meetings. He clearly attaches little significance to the role formal meetings can play in developing support for students.

The situation of imperative and non-compliance featured again in the college over the issue of teacher development. Rewards were offered for compliance and sanctions proposed if teachers did not complete a self-development log. The incentive was strong enough for many teachers to comply but no sanctions were effected for non-compliance. Managers are playing the game of control. Supported by a generalised move towards stronger public management teacher-managers may be wrestling with dual identities. The majority of managers at Templeton College are ex-teachers. They understand the pressures and limitations teachers have to deliver specific outcomes. At the same time they know the college’s survival depends on meeting targets. The game encourages a situated pragmatism for college middle managers.

Thus a structure is in place that meets the gaze of external audit but may lack clear underpinning values that are recognised by the internal members of the organization. The latter are mired in confusion and ambivalence not least because of the lack of clear purpose in the college. The duality of business and teacher-held values may deny a most

important organizational goal – shared purpose. These are some of the forces that serve to fragment social relationships and deny the possibility of an integrated culture. The reproduction of the social hierarchy may also be reflected in the choice of college leaders. The current incumbent has referred to himself as ‘an accountant’ (Research diary). The previous principal was a former university teacher who kept the title ‘Dr.’ symbolising and reinforcing his claim to power and authority in an environment where academic achievement is regarded with some ambivalence. This ambivalence was also reflected in Templeton College’s participation in the TLCFE research project. Support for teacher-researchers was endorsed by the senior management but lower down the management hierarchy there was much greater vacillation. The practical support for the researchers was compromised by the operational exigencies faced by managers. This case again illustrates the dispersal of power and authority in the college along uncertain and unclear lines.

One interviewee talked of power,

‘Head of school X and head of school Y have more [power] than other heads of school because they’ve proved themselves to be reliable, you know meeting budgetary requirements’ (Transcript 8).

Clearly this person sees the struggle for resources as a condition of privilege and greater autonomy. Where organizational goals are met, actors become the ‘heroes and heroines’ of the college. For example in one full staff meeting two teachers were named when they had achieved high retention and success rates for their courses (research diary).

Interestingly neither teacher could explain how they had achieved success with this particular cohort of students.

Templeton College – a re-examination of organizational culture

Culture may be described as an emergent set of relationship that defines the social space within which agents act out the game. The college cannot be studied in social isolation as a detached entity from the wider social influences in which it is immersed. This is perhaps one of the weaknesses of much other organizational cultural analysis. Indeed Peters and Waterman (1982) treat the organization as an island separated by a functional curtain from the wider society from which its members are drawn. The search for competitive advantage in the corporate world has permeated the boundaries of schools, colleges and universities. In this study one effect of this pressure has been described as ‘managerialism’. Other imports from the private sector may also be promoted as avenues of improvement in an educational sector that finds it necessary to *prove* its efficiency to itself and the world at large.

The hierarchy of institutions may also be matched by an endogenous hierarchy of status, and cultural capital within the colleges. The strongly vocational areas of the college, hair and beauty, construction and engineering are affected by the social ranking of academic and vocational work. In these areas of the college, vocational competence and working experience are likely to be more valued assets than qualifications. The qualifications of the staff therefore may have a more ambiguous role, than in schools or universities. The link between qualifications and position in the hierarchy is unlikely to be a linear function. The positioning of further education in the pantheon of education institutions is in itself symbolic. The location of the colleges as *bridge* between the vocational and

academic streams of education serves to reinforce the parallel nature of these two streams of education. This bifurcation also gives rise to the ambiguity of purpose that blights understanding of the sector for large swathes of the community. This contrasting dyad may also, to some extent, account for the problem of colleges to develop a clear identity. In the same way teachers within the colleges may also struggle to define a clear identity for themselves and therefore develop an unstable habitus. On the one hand some staff regard themselves as ‘academics’, the label lecturer is still widely adopted in the colleges. But also teachers have been forced to acknowledge the economic reality of their pay and conditions that rank FE ‘lecturers’ below most secondary school teachers. The most telling reflection of the declining economic status of FE teachers is however the so-called ‘binary line’. At the time of the major overhaul of lecturers’ pay and conditions, the Burnham Review, lecturers’ salaries were linked to the professions from which FE teachers were drawn. The Burnham arrangements also drew up the ‘Silver Book’ of lecturers’ pay and conditions. Incidentally even in the early 1970s this document was described as the ‘skivers charter’ revealing an unsympathetic view of the colleges held in some quarters of the media. The 1970s was a period when clearly the colleges were more closely aligned to universities rather than schools. The alignment of the colleges today reflects the vogue for market forces and colleges are perhaps more closely identified with private sector ‘businesses’. This propensity is also likely to influence the actions and behaviours of organizational members. However, the objective actions and behaviours may be part of a complex game-playing ritual and not the representation of deeply held values.

This is an attractive explanation of the facets of ‘culture’ in Templeton College. The period from incorporation to the present has seen a significant reduction in the total headcount of staff. The impact of funding regimes forced many colleges, including Templeton, into rounds of cost-saving activities. One form of cost saving was reducing staffing and one exit route was via early retirement/redundancy. Although the attractiveness of the retirement/redundancy packages has been reduced, at the time of writing long-serving members of staff were still able to leave the college via this route. Some of the early leavers may have been those most critical of ‘managerialism’ and its attack, whether real or perceived, on academic freedom. Although this study has shown that length of service was consistently associated with more negative feeling about the college, redundancy and early retirement have served both the needs of teachers and the college. This policy has also reflected an element of game playing. Redundant teachers were sometimes immediately re-employed as part-time teachers. In one case the ‘redundant’ teacher came back and taught more hours as a part-time teacher than he had as a full-time teacher (research log, 1999).

Consideration needs to be given to the impact job insecurity may have had on those teachers who have *survived* this period of change. There is little evidence that teachers in the sector have a vocational calling to FE. Economic factors and alternative employment opportunities are the more likely reasons long-serving teachers have remained in FE, illustrated by the quote from transcript 5 cited above. The negativity associated with length of service may well be attributable to this situation. The resilience of teachers, in terms of continued service to the college, may be forced rather than voluntary. Thus the

funding regime designed to promote efficiency may have perversely removed the volunteers and captured the conscripts. The impact of such a contingency, if indeed it is the case, on efficiency is another interesting aspect worthy of research.

One of the most powerful messages from the research was the substantial criticism of college managers. This was evident in all forms of data collection. Appendix 3 shows that the college scored consistently below the average of all colleges surveyed on this item. There exists in the college a divergence between managers and non-managers, the latter includes both teachers and support workers. This may be due to differences in underlying values. Is there a cultural explanation for this divergence? Perhaps the most significant issue in the college is finance. The ambition of government to raise 'efficiency' has resulted in smaller budgets but greater numbers of students. Managers are much more aware of this constraint. The requirement on them to compile statistical returns to government and the sharing of this information is likely to modify their view of constraints. There were however clearly reported management tensions. The perspective of most senior managers was that there was effective teamwork in the college, whereas most middle managers were more cautious in their judgements regarding teamwork. Responses from managers could have been modified given the sensitive nature of these issues and also the status of the researcher is also a potential influence. Further down the hierarchy, respondents are more likely to feel the effects of the financial constraints but are less aware of the reasons. Thus managers may be believed to be responsible for budgetary restrictions. Also power relations within the college determine where financial savings can be made. Subject area differences and managers' personalities may

contribute to financial decisions. Indeed, as reported earlier, one manager has very interesting things to say about her influence and was convinced that her gender influenced both interaction and decision-making with senior staff. These subtle influences may defy detection in conventional research design but may be significant issues in interpersonal relationships.

An interesting anecdote regarding teamwork is an ambivalence in the principal's words and actions. He comments on the importance of strong teamwork yet nearly always conducts his staff meetings alone, similarly for his round-Robin style of communications. The symbolic meaning attached to his mostly solo performance may be deliberate act to re-establish his position at the top of the pyramid of control. Equally it could be an economic consideration in the use of managers' time. But perhaps more likely it is just an action where no consideration has been given to the symbolic meaning that is projected.

Chapter 4 closed with a report of informant views on the objectives of the college. It was possible to identify a bifurcated perspective that could be described as a traditional teacher located set of objectives and more audit/accountability focussed set of objectives. This extent to which these objectives are compatible is a potentially important aspect of the organization culture. The *prima facie* difference is that the former, teacher located objectives are less susceptible to recognised systems of measurement. This contrasts with the latter that are designed to fulfil the requirement of measurement. Clearly one group of personnel, the middle managers, are 'stuck in the middle' of this schism, as has

been illustrated earlier. The following section explores the impact that objectives may have on the notion of teamwork. The college in common with many other organizations espouses the value and merit of teamwork – a term that can now sit comfortably with motherhood and apple pie. The effective functioning of teams does require a consensus of team members about what are the appropriate objectives. The ‘muddle’ of FE objectives is reflected in participants’ view of teams and is a further illustration of schism that seems to exist in the college.

Teams in Templeton College – fact or fiction?

The principal of the college is unambiguous, ‘If you aint got team well you’ve literally had it’ (Transcript 1). But also the principal acknowledges he has little choice in this matter,

‘Certainly when you get into bigger organizations, and we’ve seen that this college has doubled in size effectively you come to realise, it’s impossible for you to run the whole show even if you would want to’ (op.cit.).

Moving down the hierarchy however the divergence from his view of teamwork becomes wider. The middle managers, represented by heads of schools are less certain of both organizational objectives and teamwork. Manager C talks about teamwork in disconnected way, ‘I like to think that my school is a team’ (Transcript 9). In fact, as mentioned below, the school is clearly split into three sections. All sections suffer from physical separation from each other and staff do not even know each other (research log). Also the comments of the head of school did not indicate any sense of leadership; the emergence of teamwork had ‘happened’, see the quotation below. The formation of

teams is more likely to be due to informal leadership within the school. Looking up the hierarchy the manager is clear,

‘As heads of school we don’t work as a team at all’ (op. cit.)

What about the teaching staff, is there a sense of teamwork there?

‘There are in areas. It is patchy. From my perception um I got three distinct areas. [X], [Y] and [Z]. X is definitely a team, never a problem they all work together, they support each other, they cover for each other. Um Y used to bit of a team, they’ve become a bunch of individuals really it’s broken down a bit. Z well I don’t know [LAUGHS] (Transcript 9).

The different interpretations of teamwork and its importance may be superficial and makes little contribution to relationships within the college. However it is also possible that this issue is indicative of a friction that exists between staff at the college that is a real impediment to the establishment of shared purpose and values.

It is possible to construct the college as a relational structure within which employees interact. This interaction is the field within which power, knowledge, economic status et al., interact with function to produce a system of relations, in other words a culture. The actors in the field may have their roles mapped out by established patterns of behaviour. Notions of what it is to be a teacher, a manager and indeed a student are less determined by free will than by an ‘invisible hand’. The constituent fields of the organization wrestle with the distribution of power and teamwork has become a symbolic part of the ‘game’. The organization is unlikely to relinquish power to lower echelons because of the requirement to achieve a predetermined set of measurable objectives. But the game of teamwork may be played out as a symbolic gesture to project the illusion of freedom of decision where in reality the roles of the actors are much more mapped and predetermined than even the players can recognise. Even patterns of conflict in the field,

especially those related to the stereotypical struggles of management v union, may be part of the network of relations that form part of the game.

It is worth noting that 'unionisation' in the college has also undergone a radical change since incorporation and may have also contributed to a fragmentation of identities. In the period of LEA governance both colleges claimed high (90% plus) union membership. The teachers were members of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) which enjoyed sole negotiating rights for the academic staff. The college teachers are now (2002) only 60% unionised and represented by three unions (Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), and the Professional Association of Teachers (PAT)) although NATFHE remains the dominant union. Thus within the ranks of teachers there have been further forces of division.

The core of 'cultural capital' lies in the acquisition and distribution of knowledge and information, definitions of 'good' teaching and the ability of school to meet college targets. Senior managers form perceptions of students and student identity from selected sources, selecting and disregarding information that either conforms or contravenes their own constructions of the college and its students. Their own safety flavours judgements about the performance of the college and its teachers. Only one of the senior managers avoided stereotyping the students. When asked about students most managers gave optimistic and positive accounts of student behaviours. This was a sanitized and politically correct version of what the community of students should be like. It was clear evidence of 'game' playing. The student profile of Templeton College reported by

OFSTED claims that the college has ‘a large number of students from disadvantaged areas’ (OFSTED, p.5). It seems unlikely the burden of disadvantage is dropped on the college doorstep and that the baggage of disadvantage is not carried into the classrooms and workshops. Although the senior managers’ concept of performance may embrace objectives shared by others in the community of the college the ‘real game’ they know is played by a different set of rules. The returns to the funding agency, that are carefully managed and constructed, define the true purpose of the college. Once these objectives are achieved other subsidiary objectives can be achieved.

This is not a criticism of managers in further education; it is a reality imposed upon them and if they failed in their responsibility to achieve these goals the college would cease to exist. Other FE education colleges have become casualties by failing to recognize the importance of meeting funding agency targets. The habitus of managers is partly formed by an imperative to deliver funding agency targets. Colleges have also experienced ‘creative’ ways of meeting targets and the heroes of entrepreneurialism in the aftermath of incorporation sometimes became the architects of their college’s demise. The ‘game’ is a complex one that defines the relational identities of players within the community of the college and situation of the college in the wider field of UK public education. The duality of purpose is clearly recognized in role of the middle managers as has been described above. Another symbol of cultural capital is the weight given to particular sets of information. The one of the most striking examples in the current research is the use made of OFSTED college inspections. The *power* wielded by data from OFSTED reports should not be underestimated. The reports are used for both internal and external

use. The scope of this research does not extend to assessments of teaching and learning but is restricted to where OFSTED inspectors commented on organizational issues in Templeton College. The inspectors' views of college communication and management were clearly at odds with all other reports concerning these issues. Indeed senior managers commissioned their own consultants to report on remedial actions in respect to college communications. Data drawn from a small selection of evidence, most likely focus group type meetings, undermines the OFSTED claims. Such reports are quite detrimental to processes of improvement and serve to distort college priorities. Both qualitative and quantitative data collected suggest college communications require serious review. Indeed the college managers themselves know that communication systems require improvement. The OFSTED reports contribute a significant reinforcement of cultural capital that elevates the image rather than the substance of educational practice. The image management of colleges that has developed since incorporation is a further example of 'business-like' public relations. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with efforts to project a positive image. But organizations need to be mindful of the views of their employees. Contradictions between the projection of the image and perceptions of staff may be a *prima facie* cause of poor relationships and the development of a considerable cynicism. This can partly explain the most significant finding of this research that length of service at the college is associated with increasing negativity.

OFSTED inspections are particularly useful events to clearly illustrate what Bourdieu describes as the game. Teams of ex-teachers descend on colleges for a two-week period

of inspection. Colleges are given notice of these inspections although the four yearly cycles of inspection allow the college to know more or less the likely dates of inspection. This is openly a game. The college knows what the inspectors want to see and prepares the necessary documents. College staff are encouraged to think about 'image management' (research log). Templeton College believes that standardized forms and files help the process of inspection. Therefore student files and quality control files are colour coded and the contents checked to make sure the correct paperwork is in place. Non-compliance is regarded almost as sabotage. The game was endorsed by the Principal of the college when he announced after the inspection was completed in November 2002, 'we can all relax now it's over', (research diary, school staff meeting). Here was tangible proof of real management outcomes, the most powerful arm of external audited, OFSTED, had digested the evidence of performance.

The inspection report is available for public scrutiny and the college and its management would be foolhardy not to take seriously the potential impact of a negative report. But to many staff the window-dressing for inspections is a distraction from the central purpose of the business – teaching and learning. Significant amounts of management time are taken up preparing for the visit of the inspectors. Similarly significant college resources are spent preparing reports to the funding agency. To criticize the management is unfair. In fact managers show a better understanding of the game and are able to gain more authority and control. OFSTED inspections may have created a 'window-dressing' environment and colleges that seek to 'tell it how it is' may end up with negative reports. There is also a potential tension between the organizations judgement of its own

performance and that of an external agency. How can a group of people who visit the college for two weeks have 'better' judgements than those whose daily lives are spent in the college?

Success in organizations may well be linked to reading the cultural signals – understanding the game. The reconciliation of the game with subjective habitus seems to be a critical element of culture. Economic power is one reward for convergence but also, and perhaps more importantly, cultural capital is acquired. In universities it has been less important for individuals to accept the received wisdom of their employers. Protected by 'academic freedom' university teachers are less constrained by institutional ties and derive cultural capital from their academic allegiance. In colleges of further education the academic links are weaker. Despite efforts to promote research the sector struggles to establish its own identity and adopts a cautious stance on involvement in academic research. The environment for FE colleges may be hostile to the promotion of initiatives that are not closely related to recruitment, retention and achievement and few colleges have sufficient funds to experiment in uncharted territory.

It has been repeated in a number of places that Templeton College clearly does not have an integrated culture. If this finding can be generalised to other colleges of FE the notions, promoted by Peters and Waterman (1982) *inter alia*, of strong and weak cultures therefore appear not to fit further education. The current study has also found little evidence that departmental or vocational sub-cultures are strong forces within the college. Therefore it can be concluded that the evidence from Templeton College suggests

organizational culture is a fragmented and transient construct. In this respect the concept may be closer to chimera than substance.

Areas for further research

Research into organizational culture is a complex and time-consuming business. It requires the identification and assessment of deeply held values. The research difficulties are reiterated by Beugelsdijk et al. (2006) who quote Rousseau,

‘These [deeper values] require intense researcher-member interactions over time for assessments to be made [Rousseau, 1990:157]’ (Beugeldijk et al. 2006).

It is unlikely that colleges could justify the expense of research especially since the costs seem likely to outweigh the benefits. However learning about the operation of the organization has intrinsic value and knowing what is potentially unimportant is as vital as knowing what is. Much more research is needed in FE colleges to develop a greater understanding of the processes of teaching and learning. Although projects like the TLCFE have contributed significant new knowledge to the collective understanding of FE much more is needed. The impact of relational identities on learning and classroom cultures is fertile territory for further research. Not enough is understood about human agency in learning situations and in the processes of learning. Agency and structure may be key dimensions in developing a better understanding of learning in further education. The knowledge gained from research has the potential to refine and redefine practice. This seems particularly important in a sector of education that has enjoyed little stasis in its recent past.

The specific issue of organizational culture needs further examination. One of the weaknesses of this research is that it was conducted in one college, exposing the limitations of a case study in research of this kind. Although the depth of evidence from the case study is important techniques that incorporate data from other colleges, and data collected at different points in time, are required before robust conclusions can be drawn. However, part of the purpose of the research was to investigate the merit of importing private sector notions of organizations and management into publicly funded further education. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that a more cautious approach to such transfer is needed. The assumed efficacy of some aspects of managerialism is denied and the danger remains that college can meet targets by cosmetic or creative presentations of evidence. These exigencies may serve to undermine the unity of purpose that appears to be essential for a cultural understand of organizations. OFSTED inspections may have limited value in their commentaries on management and communications and their proclamations may hinder rather than support effective stewardship of public monies.

The government often proclaims the importance of further education as a contributory factor in the nation's economic development. But policy proliferation, restrictive funding and broad objectives make it difficult to fully appraise the effectiveness of the sector. Any research that contributes to our collective understanding is worthwhile.

Templeton College has in its deliberations over relocation raised the issue of ethos and purpose. This is a fruitful area for further research and perhaps is acceptable proxy to the concept of organizational culture. The colleges could do more to elevate the importance

of vocational education. Developing a research culture in the colleges can itself promote vocational education where the sector can demonstrate that it is more than an educational production line. This may be especially important in relation to developments towards continuous or life-long learning. The learning activities of college teachers could serve as an example to students that the future may depend on continuous learning and skill enhancement.

Conclusions

It cannot be said that colleges of further education do not have 'cultures'. The important question is what do we understand by the word culture? There are many authors who have formed intellectual constructs of the notion of culture. Surface enquiries may well produce evidence that such constructs of shared values and beliefs can exist within organizations at particular points in time. However the evidence of this research suggests that many definitions of organizational culture are found wanting.

Templeton College exhibits no evidence to support the idea of Martins (2000) that culture can be constructed as a 'social glue'. This research has found a diverse and contested set of views. Contestation should not be regarded as necessarily negative. In the field of education and learning contestation may be an important lever for improvement. Bijlsma and Franklin (2001) assert the plurality of cultures and subcultures within organizations but again this demands a robust definition of boundaries and scope of these various constellations. Deeper research appears to show these groupings are ephemeral to the extent that even if they do exist their existence may be transient. Brown and Dugoid

(1991) appear closer to the evidence from this research in their definition of culture as 'collections of communities of practice' (cited by Contu and Willmot, p. 293). This definition is loose enough to capture the experience of sharing without the limitation of definite parameters.

Weick (1988) also writes about organizational culture as a 'loose coupling' an idea he attributes to Glassman (1973) and March and Olsen (1975). This is an attempt to break the dominant and dominating discourse of culture as a discrete and integrated entity. The problem with this analysis is that 'looseness' is difficult to define and measure.

Templeton College certainly has 'loose coupling' of attitudes, mission and espoused values. The problem is that little imagination is needed to 'loosely couple' everything in the universe. So the concept of organizational culture ranges from an integrated corpus to a disassembly of constituent parts.

As noted in the introduction FE is the subject of change and uncertainty. This thesis has attempted to gauge whether FE colleges have an internal cultural mechanism that can mediate and filter the impact of the external environment. It is clear that the college that has been the subject of this research has no clearly defined integrated culture. The many differences between and within college departments are likely to be as significant as the differences in and between different groups of teachers and students. This chapter has offered further analysis of interpretations of the evidence gathered in this research, noted directions for further study and assesses the significance of the research findings. The

purpose of the chapter has been to address one of the fundamental questions in the research; *Does the concept of 'organizational culture' exist in English FE colleges?*

The emphasis on culture may, in part, reflect the message asserted by Peters and Waterman (1982) that 'strong' cultures can contribute to successful outcomes. Conversely organisation can also suffer from 'weak' cultures. The enthusiasm for this potential panacea gave rise to a mini industry in organizational cultural research that sought to find the key to this illusive concept in industrial and commercial organizations on both sides of the Atlantic. Carried along on this hopeful wave the notion of organizational culture has permeated many UK public sector organizations as has been outlined earlier in this thesis. There is, however, no data from this research that suggest colleges have an integrated or unitary culture let alone one that could be described as strong or weak. The enthusiasm for exploration of the cultural route to success probably says more about the pressure on managers for improved outcomes rather than a robust analysis of important organizational variables. It could be argued that the Peters and Waterman analysis is an example of superficial empiricism.

The concept of culture is often used as 'a descriptive and conversational shorthand' (Silver, p.157). Silver (2003) concludes that universities do not have cultures and the conclusion of this study could echo that for Templeton College, and possibly the further education sector. The external influences alluded to throughout this study have been influences in other colleges. The reduction in staff, the changing profile of students and the requirements of meeting external targets are likely to have had a similar impact on

other locations. However, research in other colleges should not be discouraged. There is no certainty that the findings of this study would be replicated in other colleges.

Templeton College has experienced merger, it is located in an area that has undergone significant structural change, the decline of the engineering industry, and there is no certainty that geography can be disregarded as having impact on the wider cultural environment. The recent history of FE may have shattered cultural bonds that will be rebuilt over time. This study may have captured the college, and to some extent FE, in transition. If, in the future, the complete privatization of FE is realised the impact of stronger local management and governance may facilitate the development of a unique set of variables that can be described as 'organizational culture'. The colleges, like other arms of the public sector, are currently wrestling with the duality of making money and providing services. This dyad may be a considerable impediment to the development of an integrated culture.

This research has found no evidence for the existence of culture as defined by many other researchers. The belonging to an organization clearly establishes a link between the social actors. The development of that link is influenced by complex relational identities as well as the social structures of the host society and the internal social structures of the organizations. In the accepted sense of the term, this research has found with the caveats re external validity, organizational culture does not exist in FE colleges.

The concept of culture is worthy of study. To learn more about complex social entities is intrinsically valuable. What is clear from this research is that the author has a better

understanding of the concept at the end of the research than at the beginning. This is a major development as with new understandings come the formation of different research questions, different methodologies and different interpretations. Through research teachers can learn more about themselves and more about the issues they are researching. Thus the researcher is changed by the research. Also if FE colleges undertook more research and learned more about themselves they may be able to establish a clearer definition of the sector and influence policy rather be influenced *by* policy. The struggle to define relevance, efficiency and effectiveness in education remains a critical issue for civil society. The explosion of knowledge and information has increased the importance of high quality learning. Perhaps colleges should extend the audit culture within which they are immersed to report on social attitudes, shared values, and unresolved conflicts. Small-scale research projects conducted by a diverse range of staff would offer different perspectives to inform those who make decisions. The production of knowledge by the many rather than the few may help to reconstruct the current cultural capital and create new possibility for managements and workers.

At the time of writing the college is preparing to relocate to new premises. One issue it may consider is 'ethos'. This probably requires a 'bottom-up' approach attempts to engage all the staff in a debate about the prime core values. To open such a discussion will help to refocus attention on the main business of the college; teaching and learning. The college managers have little choice in meeting the demands of inspectors and funding agencies. However, this should not be an excuse for neglecting the vital issue of ethos. The role of the leader is also a critical factor and there must be a convergence

between the espoused values of the college and the behaviour of staff with leadership responsibilities. If the college moves away from the public relations approach of mission statements and cosmetic statements of intent, it can construct a coherent set of values that encapsulates the aspirations and beliefs held by its workforce. A robust ethos may be a better platform for the future than the search for organizational cultural strength that in the last analysis does not even exist.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Dear colleagues,

I'm going to be circulating some questionnaires in the near future and I'd be really grateful of your cooperation.

The questionnaires are one of the last remaining pieces of fieldwork required for the completion of my doctorate. I will be asking some colleagues if they will allow me to tape an interview with them regarding their perceptions of college culture. Over the past 4 years I have been reading and learning about the notion of organizational culture. Now I want to test whether this idea, common in many businesses, is relevant or useful to colleges of FE.

The data collected from the questionnaires will only be used for research purposes. I will be the only person who has access to the data. Although the questionnaire is anonymous I will ensure that it will not be possible to identify any respondent and undertake not to share any data with any other parties.

Completion of the questionnaire is voluntary and if you have any reservations please do not feel obliged to complete the form.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this research please contact me on Extn. 1609 or via email at g.anderson@covcollege.ac.uk

Thank you for your support.

regards,

Graham Anderson

Appendix 2

Please mark with a √ (tick) in the column that **BEST** represents your view

Item	Item Text	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Most employees are highly involved in their work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Decisions are usually made at the level where the best information is available.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Information is widely shared so that everyone can get the information he or she needs when it's needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Everyone believes that he or she can have a positive impact.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Business planning is ongoing and involves everyone in the process to some degree.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Cooperation across different parts of the organization is actively encouraged.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	People work like they are part of a team.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Teamwork is used to get work done, rather than hierarchy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Teams are our primary building blocks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Work is organized so that each person can see the relationship between his or her job and the goals of the organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Authority is delegated so that people can act on their own.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	The "bench strength" (capability of people) is constantly improving.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	There is continuous investment in the skills of employees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please turn over and continue with the questions

Item	Item Text	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14	The capabilities of people are viewed as an important source of competitive advantage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Problems often arise because we do not have the skills necessary to do the job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	The leaders and managers "practice what they preach."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	There is a characteristic management style and a distinct set of management practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	There is a clear and consistent set of values that governs the way we do business.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	Ignoring core values will get you in trouble.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	There is an ethical code that guides our behavior and tells us right from wrong.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	When disagreements occur, we work hard to achieve "win-win" solutions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	There is a "strong" culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	It is easy to reach consensus, even on difficult issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	We often have trouble reaching agreement on key issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25	There is a clear agreement about the right way and the wrong way to do things.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26	Our approach to doing business is very consistent and predictable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please turn over and continue with the questions

Item	Item Text	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
27	People from different parts of the organization share a common perspective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28	It is easy to coordinate projects across different parts of the organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29	Working with someone from another part of this organization is like working with someone from a different organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30	There is good alignment of goals across levels.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31	The way things are done is very flexible and easy to change.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32	We respond well to competitors and other changes in the business environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33	New and improved ways to do work are continually adopted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34	Attempts to create change usually meet with resistance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35	Different parts of the organization often cooperate to create change.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36	Student comments and recommendations often lead to changes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37	Student input directly influences our decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38	All members have a deep understanding of customer wants and needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39	The interests of the student often get ignored in our decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40	We believe that seeing students as customers helps to improve our performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please turn over and continue with the questions

Item	Item Text	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
41	We view failure as an opportunity for learning and improvement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42	Innovation and risk taking are encouraged and rewarded.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43	Lots of things "fall between the cracks".	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
44	Learning is an important objective in our day-to-day work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45	We make certain that the "right hand knows what the left hand is doing."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46	There is a long-term purpose and direction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
47	Our strategy leads other organizations to change the way they compete in the industry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48	There is a clear mission that gives meaning and direction to our work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49	There is a clear strategy for the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
50	Our strategic direction is unclear to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
51	There is widespread agreement about goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
52	Leaders set goals that are ambitious, but realistic.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
53	The leadership has "gone on record" about the objectives we are trying to meet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
54	We continuously track our progress against our stated goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
55	People understand what needs to be done for us to succeed in the long run.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please turn over and continue with the questions

Item	Item Text	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
56	We have a shared vision of what the organization will be like in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57	Leaders have a long-term viewpoint.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
58	Short-term thinking often compromises our long-term vision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
59	Our vision creates excitement and motivation for our employees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
60	We are able to meet short-term demands without compromising our long-term vision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for your co-operation in completing this questionnaire

Appendix 3

Table summarising responses to the staff survey held in July 2004.

Questions	Average Rating	Variation from sector average
The College, Our Purpose, Structure and Direction		
Familiar with college mission statement	61	-10
Support college priority and strategy themes	49	-5
Know what various sections of the college do	46	-8
Know who college senior managers are and what they do	39	-17
College is managed effectively and efficiently	17	-18
Managers consult well with staff	15	-12
Senior managers are providing leadership for the college	21	-13
Summary	35	-11
Communications		
Informed about the college and its activities	32	-15
Able to feedback views to college managers	31	1
Good communications in school/support unit	45	-11
College newsletter is valuable	36	-18
Communication between services and schools are efficient	17	-14
Effect shared between schools and support units	16	-9
My views are valued	20	-13
Summary	28	-12
Self-assessment and planning		
Contribute to self-assessment reports	61	
The self-assessment process is useful	40	n/a
I contribute to our business plans	23	-20
Clear about role in the success of plans	35	-20
Summary	40	-15
Support to achieve your role		
Receive enough support from my manager	53	-7
Staff training needs plan lead to positive action	37	-12
Take responsibility for personal development and training	68	-9
Staff development activities help me fulfil my role effectively	37	-14
I found CPD log useful	28	n/a
Have an adequate workroom environment	40	-1
The rooms used are suitable for the purpose	37	-6

The catering facilities are good	32	-5
Good access to computers at work	61	
Access to the intranet helps me in work	47	-16
Access to MIS helps me in my work	29	-22
I receive effective admin/clerical support	31	-13
I receive enough IT technical training	31	-14
College premises are well maintained	28	-14
Summary	41	-11
Equal Opportunities		
Familiar with college equal opportunity and diversity policy	61	-14
The college provides equal opportunity for all learners	62	-4
The college provides equal opportunity for all staff	52	n/a
Summary	59	-12
Health and Safety		
Familiar with the college's health and safety policy	47	-22
College provides a healthy and safe environment	42	-10
Summary	44	-16
General		
College provides high quality learning opportunities	47	-9
College is committed to continual improvement	49	-4
The library facilities are good	59	n/a
Happy to be working at the college	50	-12
Understand my rights and responsibilities	60	-7
Students are well supported at the college	54	-3
College provides a suitable environment for staff with disabilities	42	-7
College provides a suitable environment for learners with disabilities	42	n/a
Summary	51	-5

Source: QPD Services

Appendix 4

List of subjects (by role) used for semi-structured interviews.*

The Principal

1 senior manager

2 heads of teaching departments (schools)

6 support/administrative workers – 4 from central campus, 2 from out-of-town site

10 teachers

The location* of some personnel is not revealed because the identification of their posts could lead to a breach of the confidentiality assurances offered,